

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA – FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

ÚSTAV ANGLICKÉHO JAZYKA A DIDAKTIKY

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

The progressive in present-day spoken British English

Průběhové tvary v současné mluvené britské angličtině

Bc. Aneta Jerglová

Praha, srpen 2019

Vedoucí diplomové práce (supervisor):

doc. PhDr. Markéta Malá, Ph.D.

DECLARATION

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně, že jsem řádně citovala všechny použité prameny a literaturu a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného či stejného titulu.

I declare that the following diploma thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned, and that this thesis has not been used in the course of other university studies or in order to acquire the same or another type of diploma.

V Praze dne 6. srpna 2019

.....

Bc. Aneta Jerglová

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor doc. PhDr. Markéta Malá, Ph.D. for her constant assistance and support during my MA studies. I am very grateful for all her advice and inspiration she gave me throughout the course of writing this thesis.

PERMISSION

Souhlasím se zapůjčením diplomové práce ke studijním účelům.

I have no objections to the MA thesis being borrowed and used for study purposes.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Průběhové tvary v angličtině, současná mluvená britská angličtina, Spoken BNC2014, stavová/dynamická slovesa, slovesa nekompatibilní s průběhovými tvary, reklasifikace, subjektivní funkce

KEY WORDS

The English Progressive, present-day spoken British English, Spoken BNC2014, stative/dynamic verbs, anti-progressive verbs, reclassification, subjective function

THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the progressive in present-day spoken British English. Recent studies of the progressive in present-day English have discovered that there has been a significant increase in frequency of the use of the progressive especially in spoken English. The increase is deemed partly due to the use of the progressive with anti-progressive verbs, with which the progressive was traditionally not applied, and to the rise of the subjective function. The aim of the diploma thesis is to determine which traditional anti-progressive verbs are used most frequently with the progressive in present-day British English as well as to determine the proportion of these verbs to verbs commonly used with the progressive. Furthermore, three frequent anti-progressive verbs – *be*, *think* and *feel* – were selected to analyse the functions of the progressive when used with anti-progressive verbs. The data is extracted from the Spoken BNC 2014 as it enables examination of the use of progressive in present-day spoken British English.

ABSTRAKT

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá průběhovými tvary v současné mluvené britské angličtině. Nedávno publikované studie zkoumající průběhové tvary současné angličtiny konstatovaly značný nárůst užití průběhových tvarů především v mluvené angličtině. Nárůst frekvence průběhových tvarů se připisuje faktu, že průběhové tvary se nyní vyskytují i se slovesy, která se v průběhových tvarech tradičně nevyskytovala. Jako druhý důvod se uvádí nárůst subjektivní funkce. Cílem diplomové práce je určit, jaká slovesa tradičně nekompatibilní s průběhovými tvary jsou v současné britské angličtině nejčastěji užívána s průběhovými tvary a také v jakém poměru jsou tato slovesa zastoupena vůči slovesům tradičně se vyskytujícím s průběhovými tvary. K analýze funkcí průběhových tvarů v kombinaci se stavovými slovesy byla vybrána tři často se vyskytující stavová slovesa – *be*, *think* a *feel*. Data jsou čerpána z korpusu Spoken BNC 2014, díky kterému je analýza užití průběhových tvarů v britské současné mluvené angličtině možná.

Table of contents

List of abbreviations	9
List of tables	10
1. Introduction	11
2. The English Progressive	12
2.1. Formal characteristics.....	13
2.1.1. Present progressive.....	13
2.1.2. Past progressive	15
2.1.3. Perfect progressive	16
2.1.4. Active and passive voice.....	17
2.1.5. The progressive in combination with modal auxiliaries.....	17
2.1.6. Affirmative/negative sentences	18
2.2. Functions of the English progressive.....	19
2.2.1. Duration.....	19
2.2.2. Temporariness.....	20
2.2.3. Incompleteness.....	21
2.2.4. Temporal framing.....	22
2.3. Classes of verbs in relation to the English progressive	23
2.3.1. Classes of verbs commonly used with the progressive	25
2.3.2. Anti-progressive verbs.....	25
2.4. Increase of special uses, complex meanings	28
2.4.1. Subjective function.....	29
2.4.2. Other special uses.....	34
2.5. Subjectification and concluding remarks	38
3. Material and Method	40
3.1. Spoken BNC2014	40
3.2. Method of the analysis.....	41
4. Analysis and discussion of the results	43
4.1. Quantitative analysis	43
4.2. Qualitative analysis	44
4.2.1. <i>Being</i>	45
4.2.2. <i>Thinking</i>	53
4.2.3. <i>Feeling</i>	59
5. Conclusion.....	65
5.1. Quantitative analysis	65
5.2. Qualitative analysis	65
5.2.1. Formal characteristics.....	66
6. References	69
7. Résumé.....	71
8. Appendix	76

List of abbreviations

BNC_spoken	Spoken sub-corpus of the British National Corpus
BoE_brspok	British spoken English (brspok), subsection of The Bank of English (BoE)
Spoken BNC2014	Spoken British National Corpus 2014
Spoken BNC1994	Spoken British National Corpus 1994

List of tables

Table 1: Frequency list of <i>ing</i> -verb forms collocating with the lemma <i>be</i> (at L3-1).....	44
Table 2: <i>Being</i> – tense distribution.....	45
Table 3: <i>Being</i> – sentence type and tense distribution	46
Table 4: <i>Being</i> – affirmative/negative sentences and subject	46
Table 5: <i>Being</i> – tense distribution and polarity.....	47
Table 6: <i>Being</i> – complementation.....	47
Table 7: <i>Being</i> – BE + <i>being funny</i>	48
Table 8: <i>Being</i> – most frequent adjectival collocates in complementation from the whole corpus.....	48
Table 9: <i>Being</i> – function	49
Table 10: <i>Being</i> – function and semantic prosody.....	50
Table 11: <i>Being</i> – function and tense distribution	51
Table 12: <i>Being</i> – function and subject	52
Table 13: <i>Thinking</i> – tense distribution	53
Table 14: <i>Thinking</i> – complementation	55
Table 15: <i>Thinking</i> – function.....	56
Table 16: <i>Thinking</i> – function and subject.....	56
Table 17: <i>Feeling</i> – tense distribution	59
Table 18: <i>Feeling</i> – complementation	61
Table 19: <i>Feeling</i> – semantic prosody.....	61
Table 20: <i>Feeling</i> – function.....	62
Table 21: <i>Feeling</i> – subject.....	63

1. Introduction

Recent studies of the progressive in present-day English have observed that there has been an increase in the use of the progressive. Aarts et al. (2010, 149-150) support this idea: “Recent research has shown that the nineteenth century trend of an increase in the frequency of use of the progressive has persisted into the twentieth century.” Not only have the researchers noted the increase of the progressive use in general, but they also observed the increase of the frequency of certain verbs which previously did not use to occur with the progressive. This claim applies especially to stative verbs, which are also labelled as anti-progressive verbs. The increase of the progressive use concerns especially present-day spoken English. In fact, “it is generally recognised that spoken language is primary, and the first locus of changes in lexis and grammar” (Aarts et al. 2010, 149). However, the use of the progressive in spoken British English has not been sufficiently studied for the lack of available data. Fortunately, today the spoken BNC 2014 enables a detailed examination of the recent changes in the use of the progressive in spoken British English.

The aim of this diploma thesis is to determine which verbs in present-day spoken British English appear most frequently with the progressive. Furthermore, the frequency of stative verbs (in general, verbs not compatible with the progressive) occurring together with the progressive will be scrutinized. Finally, the analysis of functions of the English progressive when used with anti-progressive verbs will follow. It is expected that dynamic verbs, such as verbs expressing activities or events, will be the most frequent verbs occurring with the progressive. Although the dynamic verbs are predicted to prevail, stative verbs such as verbs of mental processes or attitude are currently on the increase and are likely to appear on the list as well. It is assumed that the main reason for the increase of stative verbs used with the progressive is the necessity to express politeness or to emphasise emotional attitude.

As has been already mentioned, the changes in the use of the progressive will be examined by means of corpus research. The data will be extracted from the Spoken BNC 2014. The method of the research consists of frequency quantitative analysis of the whole spoken corpus and of detailed qualitative analysis examining only a selection of the data.

The theoretical part will summarize several recent studies of the English progressive. Furthermore, different views on the phenomena will be provided as well as the development of the changes. Chapter 2 will thus define different forms and functions of the progressive. It will also classify verbs used with the progressive. The focus will be on the increase of special uses of the progressive when employed with stative verbs. Chapter 3 will introduce the

Spoken BNC 2014 as well as the methodology. Chapter 4 will present the results of the research and the consequent analysis. The conclusion will summarize the study and results.

2. The English Progressive

In general, the English progressive expresses temporary actions or actions in progress. However, when it comes to the definition of the English progressive, it is quite difficult to reach agreement. Some linguists define the progressive as aspectual, others consider the progressive as tense marker. Therefore, these two concepts need to be defined.

Most linguists seem to regard the progressive as an aspectual rather than temporal category:

There is a general consensus among linguists that aspect is an important cognitive category, and moreover that an important subcategory of aspect is the progressive aspect; that is, the representing of a situation from within, paying attention to its duration in time and to its ongoing or dynamic character. (Leech et al. 2009, 119)

Römer (2005, 20) points out that “[a]spect means the signalling of the mode of action by some grammatical device.” Thus, aspect conveys the manner, in which the action develops. Another important feature of the English progressive, if conceived as aspectual, is the internal view of the action, which means that the situation is viewed from the inside. The speaker reveals the way in which he or she presents the situation: “The progressive takes an internal view, looking at it from the inside, as it were, as something ongoing, in progress.” (Ibid., 30) Thus, it can be pointed out that aspect expresses a subjective point of view. Therefore, some linguists consider the progressive as a subtype of the imperfective (Kranich 2010, 30). As opposed to the imperfective, the English progressive generally does not refer to habits or repeated actions. Nevertheless, it will be seen that there are some exceptions when the English progressive is used to refer to habits (cf. 2.4.1.3; 2.4.2.3). This fact is connected with the increasing complexity of its functions.

Some linguists classify the English progressive as a temporal category, in other words, they claim that the English progressive is an expression of a time-frame. Thus, the progressive can be viewed as an expression of a “temporal frame encompassing something else which as often as not is to be understood from the whole situation” (Ibid., 35). In fact, temporal framing used to be considered as one of the main functions of the English progressive. However, throughout the time the English progressive has gained several new functions. Leech (2004, 22) suggests that: “the ‘temporal frame’ effect is not an independent feature of

the Progressive form's meaning; it follows, rather, from the notion of 'limited duration'." Therefore, temporal framing should not be considered the main function of the English progressive although it is sometimes mentioned in grammar books in this way (cf. 2.2.4.).

Another solution to the problem is suggested by Dušková et al. (2006, 8.82.23),¹ who define the progressive as a temporal as well as aspectual category. The aspectual nature stems from the fact that the situation is in progress; however, it always refers to a specific time frame. Kranich (2010, 249) adds that if all functions of the English progressive are taken into account, it is impossible to find a unifying definition characterizing the "single core meaning" of the English progressive. The aim of this thesis is not to determine if the progressive represents a temporal or an aspectual category, but rather to explore the functions the '*be + V-ing*' form can perform in present-day informal spoken English. Depending on the aspectual or temporal approach to the progressive, a variety of terms has been used in the literature: "continuous form," "expanded form," "the continuous," "progressive aspect" etc. The term which will be employed throughout this study appears to be the most neutral one - the English progressive.

2.1. Formal characteristics

The English progressive is expressed by analytic means, a periphrastic form is used; the auxiliary *be* and the present participle *-ing* as in: *(i)s working*, *wi(ll) be working*, *(has)s been working* (Leech 2004, 18). There are several forms of the English progressive, which vary in tense and voice. Thus, we distinguish between the present, past and perfect progressive as well as between the progressive in active or passive voice. The frequency of these forms will be scrutinized.

2.1.1. Present progressive

The major increase of the English progressive is in the present tense, which is followed by the past tense. According to Biber et al. (1999, 461), "[t]he large majority of [...] progressive aspect verb phrases in conversation, news reportage, and academic prose are in the present tense." Fiction, on the other hand, prefers the past tense over the present tense. This is connected with the fact that "[it] is in present tense contexts that the use of the progressive is obligatory to mark that a situation holds 'now'" (Kranich 2010, 127). According to Leech et al. (2009, 126-7), the present progressive is the form 'par excellence' in speech. In her study, Römer (2005, 62) compared two corpora of spoken British English,

¹ This is an electronic version, therefore references are made to chapters instead of pages.

and she discovered that “by far the most frequent form in both corpora is the present progressive with slightly more than 70% in BNC_spoken² and almost 66% in BoE_brspok³.” The rapid growth is connected with the increase in the diversity of its functions. Leech et al. (2009, 127) attempt to identify the individual areas of uses which may have contributed to the expansion of the present progressive in English:

- quoted usage and contracted forms;
- stative verbs;
- subject type: generalized use of *you, we, they*;
- special uses:
 - (i) attitudinal use with *always*,
 - (ii) futurate use,
 - (iii) interpretive use.

These uses will be analysed in more detail in the following sections. Not only is the present progressive the most frequent form in spoken language, but Römer’s (2005, 82) findings show that “the highest share of progressives expresses a present time reference.”

Apart from the present, the present progressive can also refer to the future. There has been observed a difference in the time reference of certain verbs occurring in the present progressive form. For instance, the present progressive form of dynamic verbs such as *going, leaving* or *meeting* is employed to refer to the future. However, there are also certain verbs whose present progressive form cannot refer to the future (*it is raining*) (Nesselhauf and Römer 2007, 300). As the time reference differs according to individual verbs and their meanings, it is clear that semantics plays a significant role. Considering the use of the present progressive when referring to the future, it expresses arranged plans and events which are very likely to take place. Römer (2005, 154) adds that “reference is often made to a fixed time or date, e.g. ‘eight o’clock’, ‘ten to eight’, or ‘Christmas time’... .” For instance, the adverbial *tomorrow* is the reference point in the following sentence: *The parcel is arriving tomorrow* (Leech 2004, 55). The future reference of the present progressive will be analysed in more detail in the section dealing with the special functions of the English progressive (cf. 2.4.2.4.).

The present progressive can also refer to general truths and timeless statements as in *People are forgetting the past*. Römer (2005, 81) found it difficult to differentiate between present and future reference as “it was often the case that such ‘indeterminate’ progressive concordance lines expressed something that was valid not only at the moment of speaking but also in general for situations yet to come.” This was true especially with verbs such as *dealing, selling* or *spending*: *But then there’s too much # saving and people are not spending*

² Spoken sub-corpus of the British National Corpus

³ British spoken English (brspok), subsection of The Bank of English (BoE)

are not buying and things are being produced (Römer 2005, 97). The indeterminacy between present and future time reference already points out to the function of the English progressive to express general truths which will be discussed later (cf. 2.4.2.2.).

The present progressive can sometimes refer to the past. However, this use of the present progressive, called historical present, occurs in reporting or storytelling. This special use appears mainly in colloquial spoken language as in this example: *Last night this these, as I said, he's playing this rabbi Yeah and he's having a punch up with his brother and he keeps letting his brother* (Ibid., 84). The previous example illustrates the function of reporting, while the following one is an instance of storytelling: *Robinson Crusoe arrived on a desert island with his shipwrecked boat okay. He's not # expecting anything else he's got to manage with what he's got today* (Ibid.).

2.1.2. Past progressive

In spoken English, the past progressive is significantly less frequent than the present progressive. Contrary to the present progressive, the past progressive has not increased in its use. The past progressive expresses a temporary action taking place at a certain point in the past or in a past period going on for some time, e.g. *Suddenly we saw him. He was standing on tiptoe under a great dead oak with his braces around his neck* (Dušková et al. 2006, 8.82.22). The past progressive is used mainly in writing, particularly in fiction. This is connected with temporal framing which will be discussed later as well (cf. 2.2.4.).

However, there are some cases when the past progressive is employed in speech. Leech et al. (2009, 127) observe that in spoken English past progressives are used in reported speech when talking about past events, especially in face-to-face conversations and on the phone. When narrating past events, verbs such as *saying*, *talking* or *thinking* are quite frequent. The use of the past progressive “conveys a more vivid imagery and a greater sense of involvement than the simple past tense” (Römer 2005, 120). The narrative is then more expressive (cf. 2.4.1.). Certain verbs appear more frequently in the past progressive than in the present progressive (Ibid., 151). These are the verbs such as *walking*, *living*, *reading* or *watching*. All these verbs are “significantly common in past time contexts.” The verb *walking* is especially common in clusters, e.g. *I was walking* and *we were walking* (Ibid., 120). Furthermore, past progressives occurring in speech can also express tentativeness and politeness, e.g. *I was wondering if you could help me* (Quirk et al. 1985, 210). In this case, the past progressive does not refer to the past but to the moment of speaking, i.e. to the present. The use of the past form softens the request by removing the act to the past (cf. 2.4.1.1.).

The past progressive can also refer to the future; this is, however, infrequent. This phenomenon is called “the future in the past” (cf. 2.4.2.4.). Quirk et al. (Ibid., 218) explain that it expresses “something which is in the future when seen from a viewpoint in the past.” Furthermore, the past progressive conveys an “arrangement predetermined in the past: *I was meeting him in Bordeaux the next day*” (Ibid.). Leech (2004: 52) describes this combination as “coloured by the notion of ‘intention’ or ‘imminence.’” It is thus not guaranteed “that the event foreseen in the past actually did take place: *The beauty contests was taking place on the next day.*”

2.1.3. Perfect progressive

When compared to the present and past progressive, the perfect progressive is the least frequent form. The present perfect progressive shares features with the present perfect as well as with the progressive in general. This means that the perfect progressive refers to recent indefinite past leading to the present moment, but the action is temporary and in progress (Dušková et al. 2006, 8.82.22). A typical instance can be: *It's been snowing again* (Quirk et al. 1985, 211). The perfect progressive can also emphasise the duration of the activity leading to the consequent effects which are still apparent: *He can't drive, he has been drinking*. It can also refer to iterative action: *I have been getting up very early in the last few weeks* (Dušková et al. 2006, 8.82.22). The perfect progressive can also occur with stative verbs: *What did he mean by “don't forget”? – Something I've been meaning to tell you.* (Ibid.) Römer (2005, 122) explains that this usage conveys politeness or tentativeness. She then lists other verbs frequently occurring in the perfect progressive, such as *hearing, running, or spending*. It can be again pointed out that the frequency of certain words in combination with the perfect progressive depends on the semantics of the verbs.

Even more infrequent form than the present perfect progressive is the past perfect progressive, which shares the same features with its present counterpart. The only difference is that it refers to a situation preceding a moment in the past as the past perfect simple usually does. It appears frequently with verbs such as *eating, living, playing or seeing* (Ibid., 123). However, it is so infrequent in speech that it will not be dealt with in more detail.

2.1.4. Active and passive voice

According to Smith and Rayson (2007), there is no specific meaning of the passive progressive, with the passive “presenting a situation [in progress] from the perspective of an affected participant” (Ibid., 130). Leech et al. (2009, 136) point out that the progressive passive is “the most recent innovation in the progressive paradigm.” The use of the present progressive passive has increased in British English, while the past progressive passive has remained stable (Ibid., 137). In spoken English, the progressive passive is used in formal and factual discourse, such as broadcast news, debates and discussions (Leech et al. 2009, 137).

2.1.5. The progressive in combination with modal auxiliaries

The English progressive in combination with modals is increasing in British English (Leech et al. 2009, 124). If the progressive is combined with modal auxiliaries the construction takes the following form: a modal + *be -ing*. The most frequent modals occurring together with the progressive are *will* and *shall*, as in: ‘*We shall be suffering a critical handicap in the election if the trade unions can’t help us on this,*’ he urged (Kranich 2010, 183). Leech et al. (2009, 140) observed that “*shall* is now almost exclusively used with first-person subjects... .” The construction *will + be -ing* has increased recently in British English. Smith (2003) investigated the written language and he noted that the use of this construction is frequent in fictional dialogues between characters and not in passages told by the narrator as “it is unusual for the narrator to refer to future plans, arrangements or expectations...” (Ibid., 716). This construction is quite frequent in correspondence, particularly when describing future plans. These genres are, in fact, very close to spoken language, resembling conversation.

When used with modals the progressive refers to the future. It can refer to future progressively or non-progressively. The regular use is the progressive one. Thus, a situation in future is in progress, it is unfolding: *When you reach the end of the bridge, I’ll be waiting there to show you the way* (Quirk et al., 1985: 216). As in this example, there is, usually, a temporal frame accompanying the situation in progress. One of the non-progressive uses is called “future as a matter of course,” which means that “it suggests that predicted happening will come to pass without the interference of the volition or intention of anyone concerned” (Leech 2004: 67), e.g. *Don’t phone me at seven o’clock – I’ll be watching my favourite TV programme* (Kranich 2010, 182). The speaker is certain that the situation will happen regardless of the circumstances. The future seems to be already decided. Smith (2003, 714)

adds that it is “a use in which seemingly the event or situation is construed as an indivisible whole, with the notion of progressivity playing no part.”

The future progressive is preferred to the simple future when asking about the addressee’s intentions or when expressing an offer. This use is known as “the colourless future” (Dušková et al. 2006, 8.82.22). It addresses “a communicative need for speakers to refer to the future ‘colourlessly’, i.e. without implying volition, intention or promise” (Smith 2003, 718). Thus, speaker’s attitude is not conveyed when using the future progressive while the future simple is “marked by a personal attitude” (Ibid.). The future simple is usually applied when expressing promises. It is more direct and an immediate answer is expected. Therefore, the future progressive is preferred in some cases as it implies politeness. It is more tactful as it is rather indirect and impersonal (cf. 2.4.1.1.).

Apart from *will* and *shall*, the progressive can be used with other modals as well. When used with modals the progressive does not allow deontic interpretation, but the epistemic function is preferred: *You’d better not do that again. You must be looking for trouble* (Kranich 2010, 183). The epistemic interpretation reveals something about the truth value of the proposition, not about the obligation. Furthermore, if the progressive were not used, the function would be deontic and the meaning would be odd as it would be interpreted that it is the addressee’s duty to look for trouble (Ibid., 184). Dušková et al. (2006, 8.82.22) also mention the co-occurrence of the future perfect progressive with modals, as in: *by next January we shall have been living here for ten years*. However, this construction appears very rarely.

2.1.6. Affirmative/negative sentences

The English progressive appears mainly in affirmative sentences. The frequency of negative sentences is rather low. In Römer’s data, 93% of progressive constructions occurred in affirmative contexts, and 7% in negative contexts (Römer 2005, 73). Regarding different registers, negation is more frequent in spoken than in written language, as in: *No, I’m not listening at the moment* (Ibid.). The distribution of negation differs also according to the meaning of verbs. Again, there are some verbs which are more likely to occur in negative contexts: “*being, bothering, expecting, letting, liking, meaning, paying, stopping, suggesting, and worrying* count among the forms with comparatively high negative portions” (Ibid., 142). Conversely, verbs such as *ringing, finding, hoping, living, walking* or *wondering* hardly occur with negated progressive.

2.2. Functions of the English progressive

It is widely acknowledged that the number of functions of the English progressive has recently increased. This fact contributed to the rise in its frequency in general:

‘The progressive has evolved historically such as to convey a rather complex meaning, or set of meanings’ and ‘probably as a result of the varied and developing nature of its meanings, the progressive has enjoyed a meteoric increase in frequency of use.’ (Smith 2005⁴, cited in Aarts et al. 2010, 161)

Thus, the functional range has widened to several special uses. However, there can identified three core features of the English progressive. The meaning of the English progressive can be divided into three main components:

- (a) the happening has duration
 - (b) the happening has limited duration
 - (c) the happening is not necessarily complete.
- (Quirk et al. 1985, 198)

“[The] first two features add up to the concept of temporariness.” (Ibid.) These three main components will be now presented.

2.2.1. Duration

Duration is almost always considered as the central function of the English progressive. The term “durative” sometimes serves as a synonym for “progressive” in this context (Kranich 2010, 44). Generally, the progressive is employed to describe events which have some duration. Conversely, if the progressive is used with normally brief actions it prolongs their duration. Such actions are called “semelfactive”, i.e. “single-stage events with no result or outcome” (Ibid., 45). The event can be then imagined as a series of activities, e.g. *Mary was coughing (for five minutes)* (Ibid.). Duration is emphasised when it is compared to the present simple tense, as in: *I raise my arm!* and *I am raising my arm* (Leech 2004, 19). If the event is presented in the present simple, the action is short, it refers to an instant moment. Conversely, in combination with the progressive it is more durative and gradual as it lasts for a longer stretch of time. When scrutinizing the durative component of the English progressive, the issue of limited and unlimited duration arises. This leads to the second important feature of the English progressive - temporariness.

⁴ Smith, Nicholas (2005). “A Corpus-based Investigation of Recent Change in the Use of the Progressive in British English”. *Doctoral dissertation*, Lancaster University.

2.2.2. Temporariness

Leech (2004, 19) claims that temporariness is the most important function of the English progressive. If an action in the progressive has limited duration, it means that the action is temporary, it “includes the present moment in its time-span, stretching for a limited period into the past and into the future.” Thus, it is emphasised that the action is taking place in the present, it is being in progress “now”. The two following examples stress the momentary nature of the English progressive: *This basin is leaking.* x *This basin leaks* (Ibid., 20). The latter instance expresses only general characteristics while the former one describes the present state. Kranich (2010, 36) scrutinizes this phenomenon as “Aktuelles Präsens.” It “refers to something happening at the moment of speaking, while the simple form produces a habitual reading, as in the following minimal pair: *Paul plays tennis.* vs. *Paul is playing tennis.*” If a speaker wants to express that a situation is happening “now” the use of the progressive is obligatory in this context. Thus, Aktuelles Präsens can be identified simply by the question: *What is happening right now?* This use of the progressive is especially common in spoken language as in conversations speakers usually express what is happening or what are they doing at the moment of speaking.

As the progressive is used to express temporary actions, these actions are likely to change: “the progressive highlights the fact that a situation is susceptible to change, whereas the same does not hold for the simple form” (Williams 2002, 87⁵, cited in Levin 2013, 192). The current happening does not have the prospect of continuing indefinitely, cf. for instance, *My watch is working perfectly* (temporary state). vs. *My watch works perfectly* (permanent state – “my watch is generally a reliable one”). The latter example illustrates the unlimited duration expressed by the present simple tense (Leech 2004, 20). Kranich (2010, 46) points out that “the progressive hardly ever occurs with verbs that denote states of unlimited duration.” Dynamic actions are generally connected with temporariness; since “dynamic situations require an input of energy, they are mostly (but not always) of limited duration, because the energy is typically not endlessly supplied” (Ibid., 253). There are also certain cases in which the progressive refers to unlimited duration, however, these uses are specific in some respect. In these cases, the progressive is usually accompanied “with adverbs indicating unlimited duration...,” such as *always*: *Paul’s always sleeping at our apartment* (Ibid., 48). In this particular instance, the progressive conveys speaker’s subjective viewpoint, “the undue length or frequency of recurrence of the situation” is stressed (Ibid.). This use will be

⁵ Williams, Christopher (2002). *Non-progressive and progressive aspect in English*. Fasano: Schena Editore.

analysed in more detail in the following sections as one of the special uses of the English progressive (cf. 2.4.1.3.).

2.2.3. Incompleteness

Incompleteness is another important attribute of the English progressive. The fact that actions in the progressive are not necessarily complete “is best illustrated in the Past Tense, by ‘event verbs’ which signal a transition from one state to another (e.g. *become, die, fall, get, go, stop, take off*)” (Leech 2004, 20). The incompleteness of an action is evident if the progressive is again compared with the simple form: *The bus was stopping.* vs. *The bus stopped* (Ibid.). In the first sentence, the act of stopping is not finished yet, we can imagine the bus slowing down and gradually approaching the bus stop, whereas the second sentence clearly states that the bus arrived.

In fact, achievements and accomplishments, which usually lack duration, hardly occur in the progressive as they can be comprehended as telic events having an endpoint. Obviously, the progressive favours atelic events. However, verbs expressing accomplishments sometimes do appear in the progressive. Thus, when a typically telic verb is combined with the progressive it turns the situation into an atelic one, as in: *Max is winning*, which implies “the process leading up to the change of state” (Kranich 2010, 38). When the progressive is used with accomplishments,

the speaker chooses to exclude the final endpoint (i.e. the change of state) ... all one is left with is an assertion of the activity or activities which would typically lead up to the change of state. No claim is made, however, about the reaching of the change of state. (Ibid.)

Kranich then asserts that the result-state is “‘excluded from view’ through the choice of the progressive,” (Ibid., 39) only the preliminary activity is emphasised as it is in progress. In some cases, the incompleteness may even lead to a twist of events as in: *The boys were swimming across the estuary, but a giant wave made them turn back. One of the boys was drowning.* ... (Quirk et al. 1985, 208). If the simple form were used, it would be certain that the boy drowned. However, if the progressive is employed, it is not known how the action ended. It is possible that the boy might have been saved as the following sentence can be added: *...but I dived in and saved him* (Ibid.). Kranich (2010, 41-2) concludes that “the progressive simply does not refer to the endpoints of a situation. If the speaker chooses not to make any claim about an endpoint, it might be because s/he wishes to convey that the point was never reached.”

The fact that one of the main features characterizing the English progressive is the incompleteness, however, does not mean that an action in the progressive cannot be completed. Leech (2004, 20) illustrates this phenomenon with the following example: *I was reading between ten and eleven*. In fact, this proposition can be interpreted in two ways. The action of reading was in progress between these hours and it could even continue. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the person finished the reading exactly at eleven. Therefore, the actions expressed by the English progressive are “*not necessarily complete*” (Leech 2004, 21). When interpreting if the action is viewed as complete or incomplete, the semantics of the verb as well as its complements and the adjuncts are important aspects. This is connected with the division of events into bounded and unbounded. Events are typically bounded. However, the non-complete nature of the progressive turns the events unbounded especially when a *for*-phrase, which implies duration, is added, as in: *They were walking for a couple of hours*. Conversely, the progressive cannot be followed by *in*-phrase as it accompanies bounded telic events: **They were walking in a couple of hours* (Ibid.). Apart from the three main distinguishing features of the English progressive explained above, some linguists point out that temporal framing should not be missing on the list.

2.2.4. Temporal framing

Temporal framing is frequently mentioned in grammar books when referring to the main functions of the progressive (cf. 2.1.2.). However, Römer’s (2005, 105) findings prove that the frequency of occurrence of temporal framing is not that high. Therefore, some linguists consider temporary framing already as one of the secondary functions. According to Quirk et al. (1985, 209),

the progressive generally has the effect of surrounding a particular event or point of time with a ‘temporal frame’ ... That is, within the flow of time, there is some point of orientation from which the temporary event or state described by the verb can be seen to stretch into the future and into the past.

The temporal frame encompasses an event expressed in a non-progressive form. Thus, the action in the progressive lasts for a longer stretch of time, and the action in the simple form is included into this time span. In other words, an ongoing action is in progress when suddenly something new occurs or interrupts the ongoing action which frames the sudden event: *So anyway yesterday afternoon I was checking through it when the phone went again* (Römer 2005, 104).

Considering the present progressive, the moment of speaking is usually deemed the point of orientation. Nevertheless, temporal framing is widely applied with the past progressive, so the reference point is commonly expressed by adverbials such as *yesterday*, *last year* etc. Römer (Ibid., 105) discovered that adverbials such as *while*, *when* and *whilst* collocate with the past progressive most frequently. This points to the general function of temporal framing in past, the storytelling: *Huxley was leaving for the country, when he met Robert Chambers in the High Street* (Kranich 2010, 175). The time framing is used especially in fiction as it enables scenic narration of an action. It is more dramatic.

Temporal framing is not “an independent feature of the Progressive form’s meaning; it follows, rather, from the notion of ‘limited duration’” (cf. 2, Leech 2004, 22). Perhaps this is the reason why Quirk et al. (1985) did not include temporal framing among the three main functions (cf. 2.2.). Thus, when two actions are simultaneous and one of them is short, the other longer one is more durative. In consequence, the frame occurs and the first action is surrounded by the latter and even included in it. Quirk et al. (1985, 209) call this phenomenon “time-inclusion” and they compare it with the fact that “the relationship between two simple past forms is normally one of time-sequence.” However, if there are two actions in the progressive, there is no temporal frame set up, these actions are only simultaneous, we know nothing about their mutual temporal relation: *While she was muttering to herself, she was throwing things into a suitcase* (Leech 2004, 23). Furthermore, there are no specific verbs which would collocate with temporal framing. Römer’s (2005, 168) results show that “a comparatively large number of semantically rather diverse verbs can express this function.” Nevertheless, in many cases the progressive favours certain classes of verbs based on their semantics as will be specified in the following section. In fact, certain verbs and contexts are closely connected with certain functions.

2.3.Classes of verbs in relation to the English progressive

As has been pointed out the English progressive behaves differently according to different context and semantics of verbs. In general, there are certain verb classes which are compatible with the progressive while others are not. Consequently, there is an opposition between dynamic and stative verbs, or the so-called anti-progressive verbs. It is clear that dynamic verbs, which express events and processes, favour the English progressive as opposed to stative verbs, which refer unbounded states.

However, the division of dynamic and stative verbs as compatible and noncompatible with the English progressive is not so clear-cut as there are some cases in which stative verbs

can combine with the progressive: “Obviously, it is very much context-dependent whether verbs classified as ‘stative’ can appear in progressives.” (Römer 2005, 116) Therefore Römer (Ibid., 112) stresses that when analysing language it is important to take into account both grammar and lexis as “lexis and grammar are considered to be closely linked and strongly dependent on each other.” Kranich (2010, 55) distinguishes between overt and covert situations. This division more or less corresponds to the division of verbs into dynamic and stative verbs. She explains the dichotomy: “Overt situations are those that can be perceived by the five senses, i.e. they can be observed as physical occurrences in the outside world, while this is not true for covert situations. ... *Paul is playing tennis.*” In comparison, covert situations “are not observable in the physical world. ‘Private predicates’ belong to this group, i.e. predicates which refer to a situation going on ‘inside’ an individual, thus situations not verifiable for anyone else. ... *I’m just wondering whether he’ll come.*” (Ibid., 56) The progressive is more likely to occur with overt situations. However, there are exceptions when the progressive is applied for covert situations, especially

when speakers make reference to processes that go on within them, using so-called private verbs, as in the following instances: *This brought into my Mind, what I had formerly read in the Philosophical Transactions, for the Month of October, 1698, of the Scarabeaeus Galeatus Pulsator, found, and describ’d, by Mr. Benjamin Allen. While I was thinking upon the Account there given, I fancied I heard the Beatings somewhat stronger than before, which encourag’d me to search after it.* (Ibid., 200)

Previous studies showed that stative verbs do not appear frequently with the progressive. Nevertheless, it has been recently proved that stative verbs are used more often in combination with the progressive than ever before. There are also some dynamic verbs which rarely occur with the progressive. Römer’s (2005, 114) results show that stative verbs such as *wonder, hope, expect* or *suggest* expressing mental processes are indeed very frequent in combination with the progressive (cf. 2.3.2.). In comparison, dynamic verbs, such as *follow* or *sort*, rarely occur with the progressive (Römer 2005, 117). Leech (2004, 23) distinguishes between verbs commonly employed with the progressive and verbs which seldom occur with the progressive.

2.3.1. Classes of verbs commonly used with the progressive

Verbs frequently used with the progressive include event verbs, activity verbs and process verbs (Leech 2004, 24). With event verbs the progressive implies duration, and indicates that an event “has not yet come to an end”, e.g. *The referee blows his whistle.* vs. *The referee is blowing his whistle* (Quirk et al. 1985, 199). Event verbs are divided into momentary and transitional verbs. Momentary verbs, such as *hit, kick, nod* or *wink*, express brief events lacking duration. If the progressive is used in combination with these verbs, the events are then thought of “as a series of events, rather than of a single event” (Leech 2004, 24). The present simple and the progressive form can be compared: *He nodded* vs. *He was nodding*. The first sentence expresses a brief single moment, while the second one expresses “a repeated moment” (Ibid.). Transitional event verbs, such as *arrive, stop, die, fall* or *leave*, convey a transition from an old state to a new one. Nevertheless, when used with the progressive “the approach to a transition, rather than the transition itself” (Leech 2004, 24) is conveyed. The progressive expresses a process of transition in: *She was dying*, while the simple form, *She died*, refers to the completion of the process, a change of state (Ibid.). Activity and process verbs are the most typical verb classes occurring with the progressive. If activity verbs, such as *drink, eat, play, run, watch* or *write*, are used with the progressive, they convey that something is going on in the present moment and “they refer to a continuing, though time-limited, activity”, e.g. ‘*What are you doing?*’ ‘*I’m writing a letter.*’ (Ibid.) Process verbs, such as *change, develop, grow* or *increase*, refer to “a process of change,” (Ibid.) which has indefinite duration, as in: *The weather is changing for better*. Copular verbs, such as *become, get* and *go*, can also convey the meaning of process in some special contexts e.g. *It’s getting late* (Ibid., 25).

2.3.2. Anti-progressive verbs

In general, stative verbs, or so-called anti-progressive verbs, are incompatible with the English progressive. However,

while the progressive cannot be used with verbs with strictly stative meanings (**She is knowing the truth*), it does occur with such verbs when they do not express pure states, as in *And I’m loving every minute of it* (COCA; Spoken; 2008), where the progressive probably has an intensifying or emphatic function. (Levin 2013, 188)

Thus, stative verbs can appear in combination with the progressive if they are applied non-statively and dynamically. “This change of interpretation can usually be explained as a

transfer, or reclassification of the verb as dynamic, *e.g.* as having a meaning of process or agentivity,” (Quirk et al. 1985, 202) i.e. “since the progressive is normally reserved for events, it endows the states with the dynamism of an event” (Smith 1997, 11⁶, cited in Kranich 2010, 34). These uses of stative verbs with the progressive are then marked, there also may be a change in the meaning. While the progressive gives more duration to event verbs, stative verbs, in their very nature expressing long-lasting states, are compressed to temporary states when used with the progressive, as in: *We are living in the country.* (Quirk et al. 1985, 199). The progressive emphasises the limited duration. The semantic division of verbs compatible and non-compatible with the progressive provided by Quirk et al. and Leech is quite similar. It only differs in the fact that Quirk et al. adds the category of stance including verbs such as *live, stand, lie, sit* (Ibid., 201). Nevertheless, these verbs are generally used with the progressive, they are somewhere in between dynamic verbs and states. Therefore Leech’s division is preferred in order to distinguish between verbs compatible and non-compatible with the progressive.

Verbs typically not occurring with the progressive will be now presented. Leech (2004, 25) divides anti-progressive verbs into four classes. He distinguishes between verbs of inert perception and cognition, verbs of attitude, state verbs of *having* and *being*, and verbs of bodily/internal sensation. Verbs of inert perception, such as *feel, hear, see, smell* or *taste*, indicate that the agent’s attention is not actively directed towards some object. These verbs are normally used with the simple form, *e.g. I could see / saw someone through the window* (Ibid.). The verbs as *feel, see* and *hear* can be sometimes considered as verbs of cognition: “*We feel* (i.e. it is our feeling or opinion) *that you have so much to offer* (not **We are feeling...*, etc.).” (Ibid., 26) Nevertheless, there are some exceptions when the progressive can be used with verbs of inert perception, as in: *And you still were seeing your mum and dad and # your brothers and sisters?* or *You’re not seeing the real me! I am not just a teacher, I’m so much more than that!* (Römer 2005, 116) In these instances, the act of seeing is emphasised, it is not a passive state but an active event. The interpretation of the proposition is thus different.

Verbs of inert cognition, such as *believe, forget, think, know* or *understand*, are similar to verbs of inert perception as “they do not involve conscious effort or intention” (Leech 2004, 26). These verbs denote mental states, therefore, they are prototypical examples of stative verbs and they are regarded as typically incompatible with the progressive. Nevertheless, some of these verbs are increasing in their use with the progressive (cf. 2.3.). For instance, the verb *wonder* is very frequently found in the progressive form to express politeness (c.f.

⁶ Smith, C. S. (1997), *The Parameter of Aspect*. 2nd Ed. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

2.4.1.1.), while *believe* rarely occurs with the progressive (Kranich 2010, 56). The verb *think* can also be used tentatively: *I'm thinking that maybe the Republicans are blowing this up a little bit...* (Freund 2016, 52). By the means of the progressive and the adverbs *maybe* and *little bit*, the opinion or the suggestion is expressed in a more tentative way. Apart from this use, there is also a tentative planning/visualising function of the progressive *think* (Ibid., 58). What is special about this use is also the fact that the phrase *I'm thinking* does not have to be followed by the preposition *of*. The speaker

visualises a future event whilst also expressing some uncertainty: *So tonight is possibly going to be a takeaway if I can convince Tom. I'm thinking blanket, candles and a lazy evening. Oh and maybe some nice cheese that I may have picked up from the farm shop – dangerous place!* (Ibid.)

Freund (Ibid., 50) explains that this use appears newly in informal English. Furthermore, there is a clear difference between: *I think she's getting upset* and *I am thinking she's getting upset*. The present simple expresses state while the English progressive conveys “the activation or arousal of thought processes” (Leech 2004, 29). Thus, these verbs are considered as “activity verbs” rather than stative verbs as the process of thinking is temporary. (Ibid.)

Leech (Ibid., 26) includes volition and feeling among verbs of attitude. These are *hate*, *hope*, *like*, *love*, *prefer*, or *wish*. They usually occur in the simple form. However, there are some contexts in which they appear with the progressive, especially if they express temporariness or tentativeness: *Tim, are you wanting any fruit?* (Ibid.) Freund (2016, 52) studied the verb *love*, focusing on the slogan *I'm lovin' it*. She noted that the verb *love* has been increasingly used with the progressive, which was caused by McDonald's global advertising campaign in 2003 and their famous slogan *i'm lovin' it*. Freund (Ibid.) explains that the use of the progressive with the verb *love* intensifies the utterance. These special cases and contexts when stative verbs appear in combination with the English progressive will be commented further on (2.4.1.).

The class of state verbs of *having* and *being* does not include only these two verbs, verbs such as *belong to*, *consist of*, *cost*, *deserve*, *own* or *resemble* also belong into this group as they share the same meaning, e. g. *resemble* = *be like* (Leech 2004, 27). The progressive is not used with these verbs: **We are owning a house in the country* (Quirk et al. 1985, 198). The fact that these verbs cannot normally occur with the progressive “can be explained, in part, by the observation that stative verb meanings are inimical to the idea that some phenomenon is 'in progress'” (Quirk et al. 1985, 198). The verb *have* in its basic sense of

possessing something simply cannot be used with the progressive: *She has several sisters* vs. **She is having several sisters* (Leech 2004, 27). Nevertheless, if it is used dynamically, the progressive can be applied, as in *I'm having lunch* or *We're having fun*, where *have* refers to an activity (Ibid.). In both cases, the actions are dynamic and temporary. The meaning of the verb *have* in these examples is not *to possess*, it seems that the verb *have* resembles an auxiliary verb here. These sentences are considered instances of verbo-nominal constructions.

Leech (Ibid., 25) points to an interesting fact that it is possible to say *She's suffering* from influenza but not **He is being ill*, although the illness is a temporary rather than a permanent state. In this case, the importance of meaning and context is not the main factor influencing the choice of the progressive or the simple form. The verb *be* is generally quite incompatible with the progressive. Again, some exceptions are allowed: *I'm being facetious* (Levin 2013, 193). Kranich (2010, 156) explains that “uses of the progressive with *be* generally bring out a dynamic reading of the predicate.” The action in the sentence is thus interpreted as temporary and dynamic, it is not implied that facetiousness is the speaker's permanent quality or a state. Most likely it is just a reaction in conversation on what he or she had previously said. Kranich (Ibid., 60) then stresses that the progressive with *be* can be used only with covert properties. Therefore it is not possible to say: **?Paul is being taller than John*. Exceptions when verbs of this class can be used with the progressive will be explained more when discussing the individual uses (cf. 2.4.1.2.; 2.4.2.1.).

The last group of verbs refers to temporary states; therefore it can appear with the progressive. This group is called verbs of bodily/internal sensation and it contains verbs such as *ache*, *feel*, *hurt* or *itch*. There is virtually no difference in the meaning between the present simple and the present progressive: *My knee hurts* vs. *My knee is hurting*. However, the present simple is preferred in case of a sudden pain (Leech 2004, 27).

2.4. Increase of special uses, complex meanings

It has been noted that the increase of the English progressive is closely connected with the spread of its special functions. Most of these special functions occur in combination with stative verbs, expressing the speaker's subjective viewpoint or emphasising the proposition. Kranich (2010, 202) notes that “the use of the progressive as an emotive or expressive device has sometimes been understood as a modern invention.” Furthermore, the progressive occurs in contexts where it is not required and where it competes with the simple form. Subjective predicates “seem to allow stative predicates a little more easily...” (Kranich 2010, 253). The subjective function of the progressive will be now explained.

2.4.1. Subjective function

The progressive is used to express speaker's subjective attitude and perspective. Speakers started to use the progressive in unexpected contexts as they wanted to sound more expressive in order to be noticed (Petré 2017, 233). In fact, speakers are more likely to be noticed if they replace short expressions with longer ones or if they experiment with unconventional forms in contexts where these forms are not expected (in this case, replacement of the simple form by the progressive). This is evidenced by the so-called "foregrounded progressive," which is spread in American conversational narrative: *so she starts singing in Norwegian and I am just cracking up thinking this is some joke that someone's played and you know people are just looking around like what is this [...] so they stopped...* (Kranich 2010, 67-8). In this instance a sequence of events is narrated by means of the progressive although the past simple should be applied (cf. 2.1.2.). The progressive represents the action in a more vivid and interesting way. According to Petré (Ibid., 229),

whenever a speaker feels strongly connected (emotionally) to the contents of their statement, they will want this statement to stand out among other statements by making it somehow more emphatic. Besides conventional means such as intonation and reinforcement by gesturing and other nonverbal means, another way of achieving this is by using unconventional and unexpected language.

Thus, speakers started to use the progressive when expressing their subjective points of view or when they felt the need to emphasize something.

The most remarkable increase of the subjective uses occurs with the present progressive. The subjective function also favours first and second persons as it very often has emotive colouring and is employed in conversation. Regarding the written language, subjective use prevails in drama and private letters, which mirrors its use in speech (Kranich 2010, 211). Nevertheless, the third person is not that infrequent, referents can be: "humans, physical objects, and supernatural and abstract phenomena" (Killie 2004: 39). The increase of the subjective function of the progressive has been associated with the general spread of stative verbs in combination of the progressive. However,

there was no evidence that the progressive was spreading within or across semantic sub-categories of stativity. Rather, individual verbs appeared to attract the progressive in particular contexts, irrespective of their semantic type. (Freund 2016, 57)

Stative verbs which tolerate the progressive most and express subjectivity are *love*, *feel*, *be*, and *think* (2.3.2.). In contrast, stative verb such as *know* is very infrequent (Ibid., 59).

Therefore, it can be argued that the increase of the progressive really depends on the context and on the functions the verbs express rather than on their classification. Functions expressing subjectivity will be now presented.

2.4.1.1. Tentativeness

The function of expressing tentativeness and politeness belongs among the most significant secondary functions of the English progressive in spoken British English. Its use has been rapidly increasing recently. Quirk et al. (1985, 210) claim that the progressive “may be used with the attitudinal past tense or the present tense, to refer tentatively to a present wish or attitude”, as in: *I was wondering if you could help me* (cf. 2.1.2.). The use of the progressive makes the request less direct, “the progressive is used as a device that reduces imposition on the addressee” (Levin 2013, 192). The explanation of this phenomenon is offered by Huddleston and Pullum et al. (2002, 170):

One factor is no doubt length/complexity: polite formulations are often more complex than ordinary ones (compare *I wonder whether you'd mind opening the door* with *Open the door*). Another may be the restricted duration feature: the temporariness... .

This points back to the issue of colourless future (cf. 2.1.5.) which is less direct and more diplomatic: “*I will not be taking part* is likely to come across as more tactful – less like a forthright refusal – than *I will not take part*, *I'm not going to take part*, etc.” (Leech et al. 2009, 140)

The use of the progressive dismisses any volitional influence on the part of the speaker, therefore it is more preferred. Leech (2004, 29-30) adds that the polite use of the progressive is particularly eminent in colloquial spoken English and it is given preference over the present simple form, e.g. *What were you wanting?* Since the progressive is susceptible to change, it gives the addressee more room to refuse politely than, for instance, *I hope you'll give us some advice*, which is rather straightforward. In fact, the variant with the progressive

adds a pessimistic note: it implies that the speaker has not made a final commitment to the hope – there is still scope for a change of mind should the listener's reaction be discouraging. The progressive acquires softening function, especially when verbs such as *asking*, *checking*, *ringing*, *saying*, and *suggesting*, express an activity of the speaker that might mean a disturbance for the addressee. (Römer 2005, 165)

If the progressive is combined with the past tense (cf. 2.1.2.), it gives the proposition extra politeness “by moving the actual act of wondering further away to the past although it actually happens at the time of speaking ... *I was just wondering if you want to share it with the rest of# us.*” (Ibid., 85) The tentative use of the progressive in these requests is frequently enhanced by co-occurrence with adverbs such as *just* or *maybe* functioning as downtoners. These adverbs are softening devices making the requests less insistent. Other common collocates making the propositions more polite are non-conditional *if*, *whether*, and *actually* (Römer 2005, 79). The most frequent subject in these sentences is the first person singular *I*. The pronoun *you* is also very common. Most frequent verbs occurring with the progressive in the softening function are *wondering*, *thinking*, *saying*, *asking* or *suggesting* (Ibid., 164-5, cf. 2.3.2.). Most of these verbs are stative verbs but used non-statively. The most typical clusters found are: *I’m (just) wondering* and *I was (just) wondering* (Ibid., 126).

2.4.1.2. *being* + ADJ

A rather unusual use of the verb *be* (c.f. 2.3.2.) occurs in the combination of *being* + adjective. This construction “typically serves interpersonal functions, which is why it is most commonly found in more spontaneous and speech-like genres” (Levin 2013, 196). If the verb *be* appears in the progressive form it is reclassified from a stative to a dynamic verb (Dušková et al. 2006, 8.82.22). Therefore, *He is being clever* indicates “a form of behaviour or activity, not a permanent trait” (Quirk et al., 1985: 200). It means that in the present moment a speaker is doing or saying something clever even though he may not be clever in general. The quality following the verb in the form of *being* is “a mode of behaviour over which the person has control, rather than [...] an inherent trait of character” (Leech 2004, 30). There is also an aspect of subjective interpretation, as in: “*Yes but I mean when will you stay here?*” “*I’m staying here.*” “*Please be serious, Mr Corker.*” “*I am being serious.*” These sentences present “the evaluation or interpretation of one’s own or one’s addressee’s behavior” (Kranich 2010, 157). As the construction expresses attitude, “evaluative adjectives such as *honest*, *silly*, *unfair* and *unreasonable*” are frequent. In majority of cases, the evaluation has negative connotations as it is used when “criticizing the addressee’s behaviour” (Ibid., 196).

Moreover, this particular use of the progressive can also convey that a person is not sincere and that he or she only pretends the quality, as in: *He is being sorry* (Leech 2004, 30). The construction *be being* + adjective may also convey sarcasm, as in: “*In Saigon, the Reds were being clever again*” (Levin 2013, 193). This construction may have up to six different meanings:

- (i) it expresses temporariness;
 - (ii) it refers to specific behaviour rather than a personal trait;
 - (iii) the effects of the behaviour are observable;
 - (iv) it describes an event as violating some kind of norm;
 - (v) the construction may have emotional connotations; and
 - (vi) it may indicate that the subject is putting on an act.
- (Ibid.)

Levin then adds a seventh feature, which is politeness. According to him: *You're being unreasonable*, is “less face-threatening than *You're unreasonable*, since the progressive describes the behaviour as temporary, and something atypical of the person in question” (Ibid.). It serves as a downtoner. The frequency of this use of the construction is increasing mainly in the present tense.

2.4.1.3. Emotional emphasis/attitude (*always*), shock, irritation

The English progressive can also serve to express speaker's attitude or emotions, a subjective interpretation of a situation. A very common way how to express subjective attitude is to combine the Progressive and the adverb *always*. This use of the progressive is very special as it is “marked by the absence of the ‘temporary’ element of the normal progressive meaning” (Leech 2004, 34, cf. 2.2.2.). Conversely, the situation is durative. It may also seem that the action is habitual as it is not in progress “now” but is rather typical: *His mother is always telling him the things he is not allowed to do* (Ibid.). Adverbs such as *always*, *continually*, *constantly* or *for ever* collocate very frequently with these utterances. Nevertheless, the meaning of *always* is quite different from that used with the present simple. In the progressive the synonym for *always* is *constantly*, while in the present simple it means *on all occasions* (Dušková et al. 2006, 8.82.22). Again, there can be seen clear opposition between the progressive and the present simple. The present simple

neutrally refers to a habitual situation, the progressive seems to indicate that the speaker has a more subjective reason for stressing the undue length or frequency of recurrence of the situation: *Paul always sleeps at our apartment. Paul's always sleeping at our apartment* (Kranich 2010, 48).

The latter sentence is thus emphasised by the progressive as well as by the intensifying adverb, which “usually functions hyperbolically to convey an attitudinal nuance, such as condescension, annoyance or amusement” (Leech et al. 2009, 134).

The combination of an adverbial expressing unlimited duration and the progressive which usually refers to temporary situations, inflicts that the proposition is comprehended as

an instance of exaggeration. In fact, these propositions share hyperbolic tone and most frequently negative connotations. Speakers express their “irritation or amused disparagement” (Leech 2004, 34). Even a positive trait of a person seems to be shed by a negative evaluation or a disapproval when it appears in the progressive and with the adverb *always*. Leech (Ibid.) explains that “anyone who talked about *a man who is always giving people lifts* would tend to have a critical attitude towards the man, even though his habit of giving lifts might generally be considered laudable by other people.” This use is typical of spoken colloquial English as speakers tend to exaggerate in conversations. The negative attitude conveyed by these progressive constructions appears to be due to “a general human tendency to exaggerate the duration or frequency of situations which are perceived as irritating rather than pleasant” (Kranich 2010, 252). Frequent collocates are “second and third person pronouns (mainly *you* and *he*)” (Römer 2005, 99) as speakers disapprove of habits of other people. Frequent verbs conveying negative attitude are: *bothering, giving, letting, listening, needing* or *ringing* (Ibid., 100). Although negative prosody prevails, there are also cases, albeit infrequent, when positive attitude is conveyed: *I’m always enjoying your work because you’re constantly bringing something new to the plate. Keep at it* (Kranich 2010, 66). As has been seen, the combination of the adverbial together with the progressive is a very common way of expressing subjective view.

The subjective use of the progressive can also express shock or disbelief about something that speakers hear: *You’re not suggesting pregnancy’s a disease there are you?* (Römer 2005, 100). The addressee is shocked and surprised by the statement and is asking for reassurance that it is not meant seriously, whereby a possibility to change the statement is given to the other speaker. The most frequent verbs expressing shock or disbelief are verbs of communication, such as *saying, suggesting, telling, asking*. Consequently, the utterances relate to the present moment of speaking and the verbs co-occur with the personal pronoun *you* since: “[q]uite clearly, speakers are upset about something that another person, the person they are addressing (‘you’), has said. Significant also is the typical occurrence of ‘shock/disbelief’ progressives in interrogatives” (Ibid.). Furthermore, most of the propositions conveying shock are negative. This fact distinguishes them from expressions of politeness. It is remarkable that “the same form is used for two opposing purposes, to soften an utterance and to put emphasis on it” (Ibid., 165). To sum up, if the verb *suggesting* is employed in affirmative contexts, it conveys politeness, while if it is in a question or negated it has the emphatic function.

2.4.1.4. Interpretive

The third subjective use of the progressive is the interpretative function. Leech (2004, 22) explains its use: “it is as if we are seeing the speech act ‘from the inside’, not in a temporal sense, but in the sense of discovering its underlying interpretation”, e.g. ‘*Were you lying when you said that?*’ ‘*No, I was telling the truth.*’ Although there is the opposition between the progressive and the simple form, the two actions are simultaneous, and the temporal frame is not set up (Quirk et al. 1985, 198).

Most of the interpretive use refers to mental attitudes or communicative intention. The interpretive provides a deeper meaning which may not be discernible on the surface, it gives the speaker’s subjective perspective and attitude: *When Paul Gascoigne says he will not be happy until he stops playing football, he is talking rot*, or *In joining the Euro we might be giving away our sovereignty* (Leech et al. 2009, 134). The sentence containing the interpretive consists of two parts. The first part is the factual one, usually in the present simple form and the other one is in the progressive providing the speaker’s subjective interpretation of a situation. The interpretive in most instances refers “to situations that from mere observation are not clearly identifiable for what they are but are in need of interpretation” (Kranich 2010, 201). The use of interpretive is prominent in the present progressive as it refers to the moment of speaking. Verbs of communication, such as *saying*, *telling* or *talking*, are quite frequent. It seems that “it is the particular subjective function of the construction to convey the speaker’s interpretation that is responsible for the recent rise” (Ibid., 224).

2.4.2. Other special uses

2.4.2.1. Gradual change

Stative verbs belonging to the class of *having* and *being* (cf. 2.3.3.) can also appear with the progressive when expressing gradual change. In this context, stative verbs are again re-classified and they function as process verbs as they express some development (Leech 2004, 31). The change they refer to is not sudden, it happens “rather step by step, in small stages over an extended period of time” (Römer 2005, 101). These utterances are often followed by an expression *more and more* as in: *He is resembling his father more and more as the years go by* (Leech 2004, 45). Other common collocates are “*increasingly*, and comparatives such as *bigger*, *better*, or *closer*” (Römer 2005, 102). As the development is gradual it exhibits typical features of the progressive, it is durative, temporary, not completed and susceptible to change. However, not only verbs of *having* and *being* class can express gradual change in combination with the progressive. There are also examples with verbs of cognition (cf.

2.3.2.), such as *forget*, or process verbs (cf. 2.3.1.), such as *change*: *Oh dear I'm forgetting my engineering terms* or *I mean you know it's been erm changing all the time since Sealink # <ZGY> took it over* (Ibid., 101). The most frequent verbs expressing gradual progress are the following ones: *becoming*, *getting*, *starting*, and *changing* (Ibid.). Frequent adverbials collocating with these verbs are *now* and *just*. There is a significant tendency to express negative stance, namely that things are getting worse and more difficult: *Er, it is a very difficult climate, it's becoming increasingly difficult, and indeed, it's affecting the work that we do* (Ibid., 102). Gradual change is most frequently expressed in the present progressive as something is in progress or changing in the present “moment of speaking, even though this change or development goes on in the future and ranges over a longer stretch of time” (Römer 2005, 108).

2.4.2.2. General validity

As has been already noted sometimes it is difficult to determine if verbs in the progressive refer to the present or to the future (cf. 2.1.1.). These indeterminate cases express “something that was valid not only at the moment of speaking but also in general for situations yet to come. *Are people not bringing their cars in for servicing and repairs anyway*” (Römer 2005, 81). These utterances do not refer to situations in progress now, they rather occur repeatedly. There is also strong tendency of *if* and *when* to co-occur with the progressive in the general validity function: *Kids are all right when you're buying things for them* (Ibid., 97). Regarding the verb classes, there is no clear preference for verbs in combination with the progressive indicating general validity. The most common are, for instance, verbs such as *paying*, *wearing* or *buying* etc. Nevertheless, their frequency is not significantly higher when compared to other verbs. The subject pronouns, *you*, *they*, *we*, have generic reference. Speakers refer to people in general: *But then there's too much # saving and people are not spending are not buying and things are being produced* (Ibid.).

2.4.2.3. Habitual use

The habitual use of the progressive is also sometimes called iterative. This use corresponds to the basic use of the present simple. Leech (2004, 32) distinguishes between two different types of the habitual progressive. The first type expresses temporary habits, e.g. *I'm taking lessons this winter. ... At the moment Glyn is cycling almost twenty miles a day*, while the second type conveys repetition of events of limited duration. Leech (Ibid., 33) explains that when the progressive refers to temporary habits,

the Progressive concept of 'temporariness' applies not to the individual event that make up the series, but to the series as a whole. The meaning is '*habit in existence over a limited period*'

The period is usually determined by an adverbial as in the previous examples: *this winter* or *at the moment*. However, the adverbial can be also omitted: *I'm taking dancing lessons*. The progressive itself indicates that the action is temporary, especially when compared to the present simple which implies that the action is habitual and happens regularly. Even adverbials expressing frequency often occurring with the present simple, such as *every afternoon*, can be used with the progressive. However, it must be clear, that the action is still temporary: *I'm going to the gym every afternoon this week*. Contrary to the present simple, adverbs which denote indefinite frequency cannot be used with the progressive: **I am sometimes walking to work until my car is repaired*.

Leech (2004, 33) explains that the second type of the habitual progressive referring to iterative events of limited duration, e.g. *Whenever I pass the house the dog's barking* or *You only seem to come alive when you're discussing your work*,

applies not to the habit as a whole, but to the individual events of which the habit is composed. The effect of substituting the progressive for the present simple is thus to stretch the time-span of the event so that it forms a frame around the recurrent event or time-point.

Usually there is an adverbial indicating the time reference point. If there is no adverbial, the time is implied by the context. Römer (2005, 103) distinguishes between old and new habits. In the following examples, the first sentence presents an old habit while the second one expresses a new habit: *Fortunately I was always living in North London and # North London was always pretty quiet. I just heard on the radio # the other day <tc text=coughs> that in America now they're selling a new coffee did # anybody hear about that*. The old habits occur with the past progressive whereas the new habits are presented in the present progressive. Römer (Ibid.) found that new habits frequently occur with the adverbial *now* or *these days* and

with verbs such as *accepting* and *buying*. Old habits occur with *when* and *always* and verbs such as *living*, *staying*, *seeing* or *calling*. Römer (Ibid., 167) also described the most frequent pattern: *I'm/am not buying* and the collocation with *no more* or *any more*.

2.4.2.4. Reference to the future

The progressive can refer to the future (cf. 2.1.1.), particularly to “anticipated happenings in the future” (Leech 2004, 33). This use of the progressive is called “the present progressive futurate”; it expresses “*future event anticipated by virtue of a present plan, programme or arrangement*”, e.g. *She's getting married this spring* (Ibid., 61). The progressive futurate has been reportedly on the increase “mainly in spoken, speech-based, and more informal registers” (Nesselhauf and Römer 2007, 205). The futurate expresses near future, future situations are “firmly planned and may already be envisaged as in progress, as e.g. preparatory activities are already ongoing” (Kranich 2010, 179), e.g. *I'm leaving tomorrow* (Smith 2003, 719). In this example, the act of leaving is already arranged and therefore one can imagine that it is already in progress because “some kind of preparation (mental or physical) for leaving has already begun” (Smith 2003, 719). The event is actualized in the future. This fact is contrasted with *going + to + inf.*, which expresses only intentions or unstable plans which may change.

Sometimes it is not clear if the progressive refers to the present or to the future, this is mainly true where there is no adverbial specification, such as: *The laughter sifted out of Jed's nostrils. “Where am I sleeping?” he said* (Leech et al. 2009, 133). It is also difficult to determine whether “the speaker/writer envisages the event as already under way at the time of utterance.” (Ibid.) This applies mainly to verbs of motion conveying the act of departing: *Frank straightened up his desk and went back out through the reception area. I'm going to the ranch, he said* (Ibid.). Frequent verbs in the progressive referring to future are *come*, *go*, *leave*, *fly* and *move*. However, recent research has proved that “it is predominantly the use with nonmovement verbs that contributes to the further spread of the construction. Of these, the great majority can be classified as activity verbs” (Nesselhauf and Römer 2007, 199). Furthermore, stative verbs do not contribute in any significant way to the spread of the progressive regarding this use: “While the extension to nonactivity verbs (such as *seem* or *become*) is considered a factor in the general spread of the progressive, it thus cannot be considered an important factor in the spread of the progressive futurate” (Ibid.).

As has been noted futurate refers to firm arrangements which were formed in the past. Intentions, on the other hand, tend to be described by the form *going to + inf.* Nevertheless,

Nesselhauf and Römer (Ibid., 204) found out that “a subgroup of the sense of ‘intention’ emerged, namely in instances that do not refer to an intention that had been formed some time ago but rather to an intention arising out of a spontaneous decision.” She illustrates this finding by the following example: *Simon: Wrong. You salve my conscience by being a bloody nuisance. Your manners irritate me . . . Dave: I’m not staying – I’m not staying – I’m not staying in the fucking top of your fucking house another fucking minute* (Ibid.). It can be argued that this is another example when it is not certain if the time reference is the future or the present. However, if this use is considered as the futurate it implies that a new meaning of the progressive is emerging as Nesselhauf and Römer note that these instances occur in the period 1950–90 (Ibid., 205).

Apart from events anticipated in the future, the progressive can be used “for describing happenings which are in the future from some vantage point in the past” (cf. 2.1.2.), as in: *the beauty contest was taking place on the next day* (Leech 2004, 52). “[P]ast progressive forms with future time reference occur in reporting contexts and in embedded (*that-*) clauses”: *I thought you weren’t staying the night though? Well I’m not* (Römer 2005, 85). Future-in-the-past also conveys hypotheses, consequently the progressive co-occurs with conditional *if*: *It would still be me even if I weren’t holding a book* (Römer 2005, 86). Nevertheless, the use of the present progressive for future reference predominates.

2.5. Subjectification and concluding remarks

As the numerous functions of the progressive mentioned above suggest, “it seems likely that some aspects of progressive usage are unstable at the present time, and are undergoing continuing through gradual change” (Leech 2004, 32). Quirk et al. (1985: 202) support this idea:

Since the use of the progressive aspect has been undergoing grammatical extension over the past few hundred years, it is likely that its use is still changing at the present day, and that its description at any one time cannot be totally systematic. This would explain the difficulties faced by those attempting to account in every respect for the conditions for the use of the progressive in terms of semantic generalizations.

The change in the use of the progressive originates from innovations in spoken language: “it is individual language users who do the talking and innovate ... individual language users are, even if they may not generally be aware of it, ultimately also responsible for syntactic

change.” (Petré 2017, 227) The relation “between grammar and the desire to be noticed is reflected in the changing grammatical behaviour of individuals” (Ibid., 228).

As has been seen, the major increase of the frequency of the progressive may have been caused by the progressive acquiring subjective function:

the enormous rise in the use of the progressive since Early Modern times reflects a change in function/meaning, and that this change goes in the direction of greater subjectivity. In other words, the progressive has increasingly been used as a marker of subjectivity. (Killie 2004, 27)

Speakers started to express their subjective point of view of the situation with the help of the progressive (2.4.1.). This phenomenon is called subjectification. Thus Killie (Ibid.) claims that “the change is not explained with reference to the grammar of English, but is regarded as semantico-pragmatic or stylistic in nature, being the result of an increased subjectification of the English language.” Kranich (2010, 252) also supports this idea: “the later increase in the 19th and 20th centuries is in fact due to a larger extent to the establishment of a further subjective function of the progressive, namely the interpretative function.” Stative verbs are frequently applied in the subjective function:

progressives with private verbs convey a number of subjective meaning components such as intensification, tentativeness and politeness, and the increase in such meanings can be argued to be a prime example of subjectification. (Levin 2013, 213)

To conclude, the use of the progressive is constantly changing as it is used more and more in varying contexts and it acquires different functions. Its frequency is increasing as well as the speakers find some new ways how to express themselves. However, it should be noted that despite its functional spread the main characteristics of the English progressive remain the same.

3. Material and Method

The following analysis is based on corpus-driven research. The corpus used for the analysis is the Spoken British National Corpus 2014 (Spoken BNC2014). The method of the research consists of a quantitative frequency-based analysis of the whole spoken corpus and of a detailed qualitative analysis examining only a selection of the data.

3.1. Spoken BNC2014

The Spoken BNC2014 contains 11.5-million-words from “orthographically transcribed conversations among L1 speakers of British English from across the UK, recorded in the years 2012–2016” (Love et al. 2017, 319). It was compiled by the ESRC Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS) 1 at Lancaster University and Cambridge University Press. Its biggest advantages are its large size, representativeness and accessibility to the public for free, which facilitates and encourages university research in a significant way. The corpus represents colloquial present-day spoken British English providing evidence of spontaneous conversation in informal contexts.

The Spoken BNC2014 follows its older version the Spoken BNC1994 which proved insufficient in approximating the contemporary language. The fact that the Spoken BNC1994 contained rather outdated text samples gave an incentive to the idea of building a new spoken corpus which would mirror the actual and current state of spoken present-day English, which would consequently enable its synchronic analysis. The data collection was a part of a national campaign, resulting in 668 speakers and 1,251 recordings gathered on smartphones of the contributors (Ibid., 320). The data collection was even enhanced by the media and by a financial reward. Informed consents were obtained from all recorded speakers together with their metadata containing information about their gender, age, accent/dialect, occupation, socio-economic status, English region, nationality, mother tongue, etc. The contributors are anonymized, speaker ID codes are provided instead of names. The metadata of the speakers and texts are available for each example. The corpus is tagged revealing information of part-of speech (POS) and lemma by the CLAWS tagger the C6 tagset (Ibid., 339). The text samples are orthographically transcribed with additional diacritics, which makes it user-friendly for the analysis which is not focused on phonetics.

3.2. Method of the analysis

As has been mentioned, the method of the research consists of two steps, the quantitative frequency-based analysis of the whole spoken corpus and the detailed qualitative analysis examining only a selection of the data. The quantitative analysis provides a list of 50 most frequent verbs occurring with the progressive. The list was generated by a simple query: `_V+G`. Consequently, only the *ing*-forms which follow in close proximity the lemma *be* (collocation window from 3 to the left to 1 to the left of the *ing*-form)⁷ were selected by means of collocation search. This collocation window span covers examples such as *I'm still standing* (S23A 57)⁸ or *I'm definitely not boiling* (S23A 361). Observed collocate frequency of the lemma *be* was 97 426. Frequency breakdown then provided the most frequent *ing*-forms.

The qualitative analysis examines three anti-progressive verbs *be*, *think* and *feel* used with the progressive. The verbs were selected according to their higher frequency when compared with other stative verbs co-occurring with the progressive and their different uses if combined with the progressive. Each verb was analysed on the basis of the evidence of the first 100 examples in sentences. List of the examples analysed in the thesis is provided in the appendix. The queries for generating the examples were made by means of simple query language syntax (CQP syntax). The results were then randomized in order to obtain examples from varying texts and downloaded in a text format, which was consequently copied into an excel file. Each verb was studied from a different perspective as the uses of the anti-progressive verbs differ. However, some categories were observed in all three verbs such as the sentence type, tense, polarity, complementation, subject, function, and the presence of an intensifier/downtoner.

The query for the stative verb *be* occurring with the progressive was: `[lemma="be"] []{0,1} [word="being"] [pos!="V.+N"] within u`. Apart from the categories already mentioned, in case of *being* semantic prosody was also analysed. During the analysis, 150 random sentences were extracted from the Spoken BNC 2014, out of which 50 were excluded as they included gerunds or participles such as: *I said well that's like being mental* (S6HP 1225), or it was not certain if they exemplified the use of the progressive: *being* + subject complement, e.g. *maybe he was being he was feeding on the word of god but the word* (S8Q3

⁷ This approach made it possible to eliminate participles and gerunds which would violate the results of the search.

⁸ The code refers to the text number and the utterance number in Spoken BNC 2014. In the following analysis, all codes in brackets refer to excerpts in Spoken BNC 2014.

70). Consequently 100 examples of the construction were analysed from formal and functional perspective.

The query for the stative verb *think* occurring with the progressive was: [lemma="be"] []{0,2} [word="thinking"]. In the analysis, 103 random sentences were extracted from the Spoken BNC 2014, only three sentences were not proper instances of this construction. In these examples, *thinking* was a part of a progressive infinitive: *yeah you know you wanna you wanna always be thinking that something good is gonna happen and you know* (SDR9 1222).

The query for the stative verb *feel* occurring with the progressive was: [lemma="be"] []{0,2} [word="feeling"&pos="VVG"]. This query eliminated occurrence of the gerundial noun *feeling* in a significant way, however, some instances still remained in the dataset. These were then excluded from the excerpt, e.g. *it was more about mum's feeling toward him* (SKDX 2057). Sometimes participles occurred: *we can do half past nine now that's fine without feeling guilty* (S355 283). In total, 107 random sentences were extracted and seven of them were rejected. Apart from the usual categories, semantic prosody was also analysed.

4. Analysis and discussion of the results

4.1. Quantitative analysis

As expected, the results of the quantitative analysis revealed that dynamic verbs occur with the progressive more frequently than stative verbs. Out of the 50 verbs whose *ing*-forms followed the lemma *be* within the set collocation window, there were found seven verbs which Leech (2004, 25) refers to as “anti-progressive verbs because of their ‘infriendliness to the progressive’”, *think*, *have*, *be*, *feel*, *see*, *hope*, and *wonder*. These anti-progressive verbs belong to different semantic classes (cf. Leech 2004). *Think* and *wonder* are classified as verbs of inert cognition, *hope* is a verb of attitude, *see* and *feel* can be found among verbs of inert perception. There are also the core representatives of the class of state verbs of *having* and *being*. In some cases, verbs such as *see* and *feel* can belong to more classes than just one. While overall, event verbs prevailed, there also appeared some state verbs such as *live*, *sit*, *wear*, *stay* and *stand*, which are not classified by Leech (2004, 19) as ‘anti-progressive’ since they do combine with the progressive, and the progressive “compresses the time-span of a ‘state verb’” in these cases. These verbs are identified by Quirk et al. (1985, 205-6) as stance verbs and they “are characterized by their ability to be used both (a) with the nonprogressive to express a permanent state, and (b) with the progressive to express a temporary state” (Ibid.). The complete list of all 50 verbs occurring with the progressive can be seen in Table 1 below.⁹

No.	Query result	No. of occurrences	%
1	going	10195 ¹⁰	10.46
2	doing	9140	9.38
3	saying	5185	5.32
4	getting	3982	4.9
5	talking	3512	3.6
6	thinking	3219	3.3
7	trying	3136	3.22
8	looking	2977	3.6
9	coming	2761	2.83
10	having	2679	2.75
11	being	2085	2.14
12	working	1961	2.1
13	making	1290	1.32
14	taking	1254	1.29
15	playing	1024	1.5

⁹ The number of occurrences was not controlled manually. Therefore, the list may include nonfinite verb forms following the lemma *be* (such as gerunds and participial premodifiers), although the method eliminates them to large extent.

¹⁰ Out of the 10195 instances of *going*, there were 2489 occurrences of the future *going to* construction.

16	telling	929	0.95
17	living	845	0.87
18	sitting	834	0.86
19	paying	788	0.81
20	watching	775	0.8
21	eating	715	0.73
22	using	670	0.69
23	putting	661	0.68
24	walking	624	0.64
25	driving	596	0.61
26	happening	578	0.59
27	running	571	0.59
28	reading	570	0.59
29	moving	554	0.57
30	waiting	546	0.56
31	giving	522	0.54
32	asking	510	0.52
33	wearing	479	0.49
34	staying	478	0.49
35	starting	443	0.45
36	feeling	394	0.4
37	seeing	383	0.39
38	buying	382	0.39
39	drinking	369	0.38
40	hoping	365	0.37
41	leaving	351	0.36
42	joking	347	0.36
43	listening	346	0.36
44	recording	339	0.35
45	teaching	317	0.33
46	wondering	307	0.32
47	writing	301	0.31
48	speaking	277	0.28
49	standing	277	0.28
50	selling	276	0.28

Table 1: Frequency list of *ing*-verb forms collocating with the lemma *be* (at L3-1)

4.2. Qualitative analysis

Three verbs were studied by means of qualitative analysis: *be*, *think* and *feel*. Table 1 shows that these verbs were among the most frequent stative verbs generally non-compatible with the progressive. Their high frequency was one reason why these verbs were selected for the qualitative analysis. Another reason was the variety of their functions, which will be seen below.

4.2.1. *Being*

As was mentioned in the theoretical part the verb *be* is usually considered anti-progressive, however, it is reclassified as a dynamic verb when it appears in the construction *being* + subject complement. The verb *be* in this construction is a copular verb. Although in literature the term *BE being ADJ construction* is used (Levin 2013, 192), the data show that apart from adjective phrases, *being* can be also complemented by noun phrases, as will be seen in the following analysis. Therefore, the term *being* + subject complement is used here.

4.2.1.1. Formal characteristics

Sentence type

The most common sentence type for the *being* + subject complement was a declarative sentence (ex. 1a, 88 %). There were only 12 interrogative sentences. If the construction appeared in interrogative sentences speakers made inquiry about their own or the addressees' behaviour. They either questioned the way they were acting or perceived (ex. 1b) or they demanded clarification of the addressee's communicative intention (ex. 1c).

- (1)a. he's being disloyal to her (SQWC 225)
- b. am I being incredibly stupid? (SVBB 3010)
- c. are you being serious or not? (S6W8 3210)

Tense

Regarding tense, the results support the findings mentioned in the theoretical part. The most prominent tense occurring with the progressive was, indeed, the present tense (69 %, see Table 2). Past tense amounted to 30 %, and only one example of the present perfect tense use was found (ex. 2a).

Tense	Number of hits
present	69
past	30
present perfect	1
Total	100

Table 2: *Being* – tense distribution

The reference of the present progressive was present in all examples. Speakers referred to the moment of speaking (ex. 2b). The past progressive described past situations or past behaviour of speakers (ex. 2c).

- (2)a. people who go on whose thing *hasn't always been* being good at school (SMYJ 228)
- b. oh don't be ridiculous - you have - I 'm not being ridiculous (SWY3 132)
- c. that's unkind - I wasn't being unkind I - you were being unkind- I wasn't honestly (S4HW 652)

Tense varied more in declarative sentences (67.1% instances in the present, 31.8% in the past, and 1.1% in the present perfect, see Table 3) than in interrogative ones (83.3% instances in the present, and 16.7% in the past, see Table 3).

	Declarative clause		Interrogative clause	
Tense	Number of hits	%	Number of hits	%
present	59	67.1	10	83.3
past	28	31.8	2	16.7
present perfect	1	1.1	0	0
Total	88	100.0	12	100.0

Table 3: *Being* – sentence type and tense distribution

Affirmative/negative sentences

As expected, affirmative sentences prevailed (82 %, see Table 4). The distribution of subjects was rather balanced with *you* (17 hits), *he* (16 hits) and *I* (12 hits) being the most frequent subjects. However, in the case of negative sentences the frequency of the first person singular *I* was significantly higher in comparison with other subjects (13 hits out of 18 negative sentences). The first person singular used in negative sentences formed a very common pattern (see Table 4), which is connected with the function of these propositions as speakers usually interpret their own stance (ex. 3). Speakers do so to emphasize their statement and to make clear that they really mean what they are saying. This function will be commented upon in more detail below.

	Affirmative clause		Negative clause	
subject	Number of hits	%	Number of hits	%
I	12	14.6	13	72.2
you	17	20.7	1	5.6
he	16	19.5	1	5.6
they	9	11.0	0	0
proper noun	8	9.8	0	0
we	7	8.5	0	0
she	5	6.1	0	0
it	1	1.2	2	11.1
someone/everyone/everybody	3	3.7	0	0
this/that	2	2.4	0	0
common noun	2	2.4	1	5.6
Total	82	100.0	18	100.0

Table 4: *Being* – affirmative/negative sentences and subject

(3) *I'm not being funny* he was he was horrible (S8X7 272)

Furthermore, sentences were negated more in the present than in the past (see Table 5) as they refer to the moment of speaking (ex. 3).

Polarity and tense	Number of hits
present	69
affirmative	54
negative	15
past	30
affirmative	28
negative	2
perfect	1
negative	1
Total	100

Table 5: *Being* – tense distribution and polarity

Complementation

The verb *be* in the progressive is typically complemented by an adjective phrase (86% of *being*-sentences, see Table 6). Apart from adjective phrases, there also appeared instances of noun phrases, with the majority headed by nouns and only one by a pronoun (ex. 4a).

Complementation	Number of hits
Adjective phrase	86
Noun phrase	14
Total	100

Table 6: *Being* – complementation

The most frequent adjectives complementing *BE* + *being* (where the frequency is higher than 1, the number of occurrences is given in brackets) comprise *funny* (8), *serious* (5), *nice* (4), *rude* (3), *silly* (3), *cheeky* (2), *unkind* (2), *sensible* (2), *honest* (2), *sincere* (2), *stupid* (2), *horrible* (2), *pathetic* (2), *mean* (2). Adjectives which occurred once were: *sick*, *responsive*, *sweet and attentive*, *generous*, *sarcastic*, *snappy*, *alright*, *proactive*, *anonymous*, *rubbish*, *arsey*, *difficult*, *childish*, *enthusiastic*, *ironic*, *formal*, *lame*, *unhelpful*, *lazy*, *quiet*, *lovely*, *ridiculous*, *malicious*, *contentious*, *matter-of-fact*, *demanding*, *awkward*, *shitty*, *upfront*, *disloyal*, *big headed*, *smart*, *bitchy*, *strong*, *stoic*, *patient*, *supportive*, *patronising*, *truthful*, *polite*, *accommodating*, *practical*, *devotional*, *a bit off*, *methodical* and *ill*. It is interesting that Leech mentions that the combination of the *being* + *ill* is impossible (see 2.3.2.), however, it appeared in the data (ex. 4b).

Most of the sentences with the adjective *funny* were negative, their function was interpretative and the subject was the first person singular (ex. 3). It seems, therefore, that the expression *I'm not being funny* is becoming fixed (with the meaning *to be serious*). This is

further supported by evidence from the whole corpus: present tense, 1st person negative statements make up 87.9% of sentences with *BE + being funny* (see Table 7).

<i>BE + being funny</i>	Σ	%
'm (like) not being funny	65	87.9
was (just) being funny	4	5.4
'm (just) being funny	3	4.1
's no yes being funny	1	1.4
was like not being funny	1	1.4
Total	74	100

Table 7: *Being* – *BE + being funny*

The adjective *serious* showed, in turn, quite different features (ex. 1c). Most of the sentences were interrogative with the second person as a subject, addressing other speakers. The function was also interpretative. The adjective *nice* appeared in affirmative declarative sentences, with varying subjects, but the function was in all cases evaluative (ex. 4c). These uses of the progressive *being* + subject complement reveal common collocation clusters or language patterns which are used very frequently in spoken language. The instances of complementation of *being* listed above were found in the 100 random sentences. Therefore, a list of 20 most frequent adjectives in complementation (see Table 8) was extracted from the whole Spoken BNC2014 by means of the collocation search using the following query: [lemma="be"] []{0,1} [word="being"]. The first three most frequent adjectives: *funny*, *serious*, *nice* appear at the same positions on the frequency list, and most of the 20 adjectives match the ones listed above.¹¹

No.	Word	No.	Word
1	funny	11	mean
2	serious	12	horrible
3	nice	13	sarcastic
4	rude	14	weird
5	good	15	pathetic
6	silly	16	racist
7	stupid	17	arsey
8	honest	18	cheeky
9	sick	19	nasty
10	annoying	20	Okay

Table 8: *Being* – most frequent adjectival collocates in complementation from the whole corpus

¹¹ This sample of 100 random sentences therefore appears to reflect the distribution in the whole corpus and the actual use of the construction *being* + subject complement. While *nice* is generally frequent in the corpus (1,208.4 instances per million words), the frequencies of *funny* and *serious* are lower (356.8 and 52.9 instances per million words, respectively).

Some of the adjectives were premodified by intensifiers or downtoners. The most common degree premodifiers where the adverbs *just* (ex. 4a, b, 12 hits) and *so* (ex. 4c, 5 hits), followed by *a bit* (4), *quite* (3), *very* (3), *really* (2). There was also an interesting example of the construction *being* + subject complement with the downtoner *a bit* which serves as an indicator of politeness (ex. 4d). In this case, the speaker does not want to criticize the addressee heavily, therefore he/she uses the progressive as it implies that the behaviour is only temporary. The downtoner makes the statement even less negative and direct.

- (4) a. it's eh so is he actually funnier when he's *just* being *himself*? (SV49 429)
 b. what's she up to? what's she – nothing she's *just* being *ill* (SDJA 362)
 c. they're being *so* nice (S8K9 246)
 d. you know for you er *you are being a bit snappy* but you erg- in the whole scale of people being snappy it's such a small thing that nobody would really notice it (S28F 282)

In 14 clauses, *being* was complemented by a noun phrase (Table 6 above). Each of the noun phrases occurred only once: *an ex-copper*, *this person*, *nuisance*, *a dick*, *a bitch*, *a father*, *a right cow*, *a good company*, *a pompous arsehole*, *a knob*, *a total cunt honk*, *a poser*, *a smartarse* and *himself*. Most of the nouns were evaluative (ex. 5a, 5b); some of these were premodified by intensifiers or modifiers (ex. 5b). Out of the five noun phrases with non-evaluative heads, one comprised an evaluative adjective (ex. 5c). The high representation of evaluative adjectives and noun phrases among the complements of *being* suggests a close tie between the copular predication with the progressive *being* and the evaluative function.

- (5)a. oh you are just being *nuisance* (S2XV 742)
 b. he's just being *a pompous arsehole* he is (SVD6 1701)
 c. I'm not being *very good company* this tonight (S79Y 271)

As can be, seen most of the phrases in the subject complement share negative semantic prosody. This will be discussed more in connection with the functions.

4.2.1.2. Function

The construction *being* + subject complement has two functions, evaluative and interpretative. The most frequent function by far was the evaluative function (see Table 9).

Function	Number of hits
evaluative	69
interpretative	20
interpretative/evaluative	11
Total	100

Table 9: *Being* – function

Evaluative function

The evaluative function usually serves to express speakers' attitude towards the present behaviour of other people (ex. 6a). If the verb *be* appears in the progressive, it is reclassified from stative to dynamic. *Being difficult and horrible* thus does not imply permanent quality of the speakers, it expresses rather temporary behaviour. The majority of the evaluative sentences were in the present tense (46 hits) as this is the most frequent tense for the progressive in general. However, there were also a few cases when the progressive was used in past (22 hits). If the construction *being* + subject complement expressing evaluative function was used in the past progressive it usually assessed the past behaviour or it was a part of a storytelling (ex. 6b). The most frequent subject was the third person singular *he* (ex. 6c), pronouns *you* and *they* followed. This phenomenon is connected with the fact that speakers tend to evaluate behaviour and express their attitudes about other people rather than themselves. The majority of evaluative adjectives and nouns shared negative prosody as they denounced behaviour of others (see Table 10). Out of 69 evaluative statements, 51 statements expressed negative stance (6a, b, c, d). Some of the examples were highly emotional. Apart from negative adjectives and nouns in complementation and intensifiers, there were other expressions highlighting the emotion, especially the swear words (ex. 6d). As can be seen, these sentences show inbuilt negative evaluation. Of course, not all sentences expressing negative evaluation were so emotional. There were only 18 examples of evaluative sentences with positive semantic prosody (ex. 4c).

- (6) a. with the amount of money that they've got they're *being difficult* aren't they?
oh they're *just being horrible* (SQVW 482)
b. like stopped the car and *she was like cos I was being really childish* and *I was like* her (STK7 39)
c. *he's not being arsey* with anybody else *he's just being arsey with me* (SRD5 796)
d. why *the fuck* are you *such a cunt* like why are you *being so mean* like? ruining it for everyone... (STGP 146)

Function and semantic prosody	Number of hits
Evaluative	69
negative	51
positive	18
Interpretative	20
interpretative/evaluative	11
negative	10
neutral	1
Total	100

Table 10: *Being* – function and semantic prosody

Interpretative function

The interpretative function was almost exclusively limited to the present progressive (Table 11).

Function and tense	Number of hits
Evaluative	69
present	46
past	22
perfect	1
Interpretative	20
present	18
past	2
Interpretative/evaluative	11
past	6
present	5
Total	100

Table 11: *Being* – function and tense distribution

This is mainly caused by the fact that speakers interpret their behaviour at the moment of speaking as they want their message to come across clear (ex. 3). Speakers also react on something the addressees have said (ex. 2b). To keep the communication successful, speakers specify their intentions to their addressees. The message is further endorsed by another phrase in the progressive: *I'm just saying*, which also has an interpretative function (ex. 7a). The interpretative function is also closely connected with the choice of the subject, the most frequent subject being the first person singular *I* (see Table 12). The reason for this is that speakers usually interpret their own behaviour. Therefore, the choice of the subject, especially the pronoun *I* can be considered a distinguishing feature of the interpretative function. The second most frequent subject in the interpretative function was the pronoun *you* which appeared almost always in interrogative sentences as opposed to the cases with *I* which were found in declarative sentences. In these examples, addressees were not sure about the meaning of what the other speakers had said, or they did not believe their statements. Therefore, they asked for clarification (ex. 1c). As has been already noted the adjective *serious* was the most frequent option in these questions. The interpretative function is neutral in terms of stance, as speakers do not evaluate behaviour but enhance the comprehension (ex. 7b). Therefore, semantic prosody was not analysed. There were also some indeterminate cases when it was difficult to distinguish between the evaluative and interpretative function (ex. 7c, see Table 9). The speaker in this sentence interprets and evaluates his own behaviour at the same time. Therefore, such cases were analysed as being instances of both.

- (7) a. *I'm not being funny I'm just saying* - well well I get backchat from (S6UQ 173)
 b. *I was just joking* – oh - but yeah - I thought you *were being serious* - I thought that was a thing ticket for four (SBM6 2486)
 c. uh sorry what what did you say then? - *I was just being stupid I said* shall I change my name to Claire Claire (SGAX 1061)

Function and subject	Number of hits
Evaluative	69
he	15
you	12
they	8
proper noun	8
I	7
we	5
she	4
it/that	4
everybody, everyone, someone	3
common noun	3
interpretative	20
I	12
you	5
we	1
this	1
she	1
interpretative/evaluative	11
I	6
he	2
we	1
you	1
they	1
Total	100

Table 12: *Being* – function and subject

4.2.1.3. Conclusion

As the results showed, the construction *being* + subject complement is mostly used in the present progressive. Evaluative function is the most frequent one as speakers express their attitudes, the use of the progressive is thus subjective. Usually, speakers evaluate behaviour of others, therefore the most frequent subject was the third person singular *he*. Semantic prosody of whole propositions is most frequently negative. The evaluative function does not show any semantic preference in case of complementation. In contrast, the samples revealed strong semantic preference for the interpretative function. The most frequent subject was *I* as speakers interpreted their own behaviour. There appeared frequent invariable phrases, such as *I'm not being funny* (ex. 3, 7a). These patterns are not constructed by speakers from individual

chunks, they are already stored as units: “as the word is learnt through encounters with it in speech and writing, it is loaded with the cumulative effects of those encounters such that it is part of our knowledge of the word that it co-occurs with other words” (Hoey 2004¹², cited in Partington 2004, 132). These patterns are then pragmatized and incorporated in language use. Overall, both functions of the progressive were subjective, which support recent findings of the increase in the use of progressive.

4.2.2. *Thinking*

The verb *think* is considered one of the most prototypical examples of anti-progressive verbs. However, in combination with the progressive it behaves as a dynamic verb as the result of reclassification.

4.2.2.1. Formal characteristics

Sentence type

As opposed to the *being* + subject complement the ratio of interrogative sentences was much lower in the case of *thinking* (2 hits). This may be connected with the prevalence of the first person singular *I* in the position of subject and the functions of *think*, as will be seen further on. Both interrogative sentences shared the subject *you* and the interpretative function (ex. 8a, b). In these examples, speakers try to interpret what other speakers think or intend to do. The interpretative function will be elaborated on in more detail below.

- (8) a. What were you thinking? do you want some water? (SKYQ 109)
 b. oh right is that what you were thinking of? (SGN8 1056)

Tense

The tense distribution differed from that of *being* as well. Although the present tense prevailed (54 %, see Table 13), the results were more balanced. The past tense was more prominent as it refers to the process of thought which serves as a temporal frame for past events (ex. 9a) or as a tool of being more polite when making suggestions (ex. 9b). There were also some cases when speakers used historic present to narrate past events (ex. 9c).

Tense	Number of hits
present	54
past	46
Total	100

Table 13: *Thinking* – tense distribution

¹² Hoey, M. (Forthcoming). *Lexical priming and the properties of text*. In A. Partington, J. Morley, & L. Haarman (Eds.), *Corpora and Discourse*. Bern: Peter Lang.

- (9)a. *I was coming home* this way every time and *I was thinking* Jesus Christ you get so used to the route every (SE3Y 145)
- b. *I was thinking about ordering* a pizza from Papa John' (S5B4 915)
- c. and *I saw this car* in my s- and *I'm thinking he wants to come past* (ST8H 321)

Affirmative/negative sentences

As expected, affirmative sentences prevailed (98 %), there were found only two instances of negative sentences in the dataset. Both sentences were in the present tense. The first one is an instance of temporal framing, two actions in present progressive occur simultaneously (ex. 10a). The other one exemplifies the subjective use of the progressive (ex. 10b). The speaker expresses disbelief and bewilderment about something he or she heard and asks for reassurance. This sentence presents a common pattern of the subjective progressive, as had been explained in the theoretical part (see [2.4.1.3](#)). It is a negative sentence in the present tense and the subject is the second person *you*. The function is interpretative. However, this pattern occurred in the dataset only once, which may be due to the small overall size of the sample.

- (10) a. *I'm not even thinking* about religion *when I'm watching* these at all (SQ82 578)
- b. *you're not thinking* about taking them out *are you?* (SF8D 2465)

Complementation

The verb *think* was most often complemented by dependent declarative clauses (see Table 14). Most of them were connected asyndetically (ex. 11a) or by the conjunction *that* (6 hits, ex 11b). Regarding the asyndetic connection, sometimes it was not clear if the clauses were integrated into the sentences or if they could be regarded as instances of direct speech. However, there were cases when direct speech was introduced with interjections such as *oh* (ex. 11c, 6 hits), *mm* (3), *yeah* (2), *fuck* (1), *well* (1), *Jesus Christ* (ex. 9a) signalling that speakers are going to use direct speech. Furthermore, they render the proposition more subjective and emphatic. Prepositional phrases were also very frequent in complementation, prepositions *of* (ex. 11d) and *about* typically preceded gerunds which expressed suggestions and planning. The most common pronoun following the prepositions was *it* (ex. 11e, 5 hits). As was pointed out by Freund, complements do not have to be introduced by any prepositions. This was the case of nouns (ex. 11f), pronouns (ex. 11g), gerunds (ex. 11h) as well as infinitive.

Complementation form	Number of hits
Dependent content clause	48
declarative (asyndetic, that)	44
interrogative (if)	2
exclamative (how)	1
imperative	1
Prepositional phrase (of/about)	28
Noun phrase (noun/pronoun)	11
Direct speech (question)	6
Zero complementation	4
Gerund	2
Infinitive	1
Total	100

Table 14: *Thinking* – complementation

- (11) a. *I was thinking* we could keep it here (SHKF 319)
b. *I was just thinking that* it's funny (S8K9 496)
c. *I'm thinking oh god please* don't let it be a problem (S28F 2346)
d. we're *thinking of watching* a a horror (SV5A 7)
e. I think you were *thinking about it* weren't you? (SZQX 1804)
f. we were *thinking possibly Scrabble?* (SCWW 92)
g. I was *thinking that too* (S3JF 1394)
h. I was *thinking taking* my nail polish off (SXRR 248)

4.2.2.2. Function

According to Leech's division of anti-progressive verbs, the verb *think* ranks among verbs of inert cognition which denote mental states without any conscious effort on the part of the subject (see 2.3.2.). However, the verb *think* can be reclassified as a dynamic verb when used with the progressive. In that case, it shows a certain degree of active involvement and temporary duration, and it is thus reclassified among activity and process verbs. Apart from the basic functions of the progressive, the progressive form of the verb *think* performs special functions which cannot be accounted for by the general characteristics of the progressive (i.e. temporariness, temporal frames). These uses are identified as tentative and interpretative, which share higher degree of subjectivity.

Activity/process use

The most frequent function was the activation of thought processes (see Table 15), when speakers emphasised the act of thinking or considering something (ex. 9a, c; 10a; 11b, c, 12a). As can be seen, speakers manifest mental exertion equivalent to ruminating, which suggests some conscious mental activity. The event of thinking is intensified and made more vivid by the use of the progressive. At the same time, it is temporary. The event of thinking is taking

place at the present moment, speakers do not express their permanent opinions or beliefs. Very often a temporal frame is set (ex. 12b).

The most frequent subject overall was the first person singular *I*. This fact is closely connected with the functions of the verb *think* (see Table 16). Speakers usually describe what they themselves think. The prevalence of the subject *I* also correlates with the increased degree of subjectivity of propositions when used with the progressive. There was also an interesting case of *you* used in generic sense which referred not only to thought processes of the addressees but also to the thoughts of the speakers. (ex. 12c). If speakers were not certain about the truth value of their propositions, they signalled their uncertainty by downtoners, such as *sort of* (ex. 12d, 2 hits), *you know* (2 hits) or *a little bit* (ex. 12e). This also makes the proposition more tentative (as will be discussed in the following section).

Function	Number of hits
activity/process use	50
special functions	50
• tentativeness	30
• interpretative	20
Total	100

Table 15: *Thinking* – function

Function and subject	Number of hits
Activity/process use	50
I	39
you- generic	5
we	2
he	2
everyone	1
part of me	1
Tentativeness	30
I	18
we	5
you	5
common noun	2
Interpretative	20
you	8
I	7
he	2
she	2
they	1
Total	100

Table 16: *Thinking* – function and subject

- (12)a. oh did you? – oh I thought I thought *I'm thinking* - I used it I used it this morning (SKRC 695)
- b. *I was thinking* about that *last night when I was in bed* (SRRS 266)
- c. and *you're thinking* well where is the balance? (SD65 1396)
- d. *I'm sort of thinking* this guy you know is you know always you know (S8JW 1020)
- e. well *I suppose part of me is thinking a little bit* if it was a question of money (SBG4 729)

Tentativeness

The verb *think* in combination with the progressive commonly expresses politeness whereby propositions are softened. Usually, the progressive was used to make suggestions tentative so that the addressees would not feel the pressure of consenting. This is further supported by the use of the past tense (ex. 9b, 11 a, f, h). Furthermore, the tentative planning function of the progressive, which Freund (2016, 58) pointed out (see 2.3.2.), also appeared among the examples. In these cases, speakers are considering or planning something but they are not yet certain if they are going to realize their plan (ex. 11h, 13a). This may be intensified further by the expression *more and more* (ex. 13b), which also conveys gradual change. Usually prepositions such as *about* or *of* follow the verb *think*, but if the progressive has this particular function the preposition can be omitted (ex. 11f, h; 13c). Tentativeness and the degree of uncertainty is also strengthened by downtoners, such as *just* (ex. 13d), *maybe* (ex. 13a), *possibly* (ex. 11f). There was also an interesting example of fronted declarative clause. In this case, the main clause *I was thinking* is added as a politeness device, softening the speaker's claim as there was a disagreement between the speakers and this speaker presents her opinion in the discussion (ex. 13e).

- (13)a. I was thinking of *maybe* swimming (SEYD 425)
- b. I don't know enough about it but *I I'm thinking more and more* about being involved in like politics or something (SJV7 633)
- c. hmm let 's maybe do lamb ooh *I 'm thinking gammon* (SCWW 147)
- d. I was *just thinking* either we go in two cars (SMEB 836)
- e. you can't make them swim *I was thinking* (S2DD 737)

Interpretative function

As opposed to the two previous functions of the verb *think* in the progressive, the most frequent subject of the interpretative function was *you* instead of *I* (see Table 16). This is mainly caused by the fact that speakers try to interpret the behaviour of others (ex. 14a) or they ask for reassurance (ex. 8b). Sometimes they do not believe what someone had said and they need clarification (ex. 10b). Speakers also clarify their own thoughts (ex. 14b) and show that they share the same thoughts with others (ex. 14c). Therefore, the first person singular *I* was almost as frequent as *you*. Sometimes when speakers attempt at interpreting the message of other speakers they are not very certain about their guesses, therefore a downtoner, such as *probably* (ex. 14d, 3 hits), or a question tag is added (ex. 10b).

- (14)a. so you're thinking as I do (S2C9 1580)
- b. that's what I'm thinking (SD65 111)
- c. I was thinking that too (S3JF 1394)
- d. but at the same time I think she was *probably* thinking I 'm seeing ANONnameM the day after so yeah she (SXR9 748)

4.2.2.3. Conclusion

The results show that the verb *think* in combination with the progressive occurs mainly in declarative sentences. As opposed to the *being* + adjective construction, the distribution of present and past tense is balanced. The verb *think* tends to be complemented mainly by dependent content clauses and prepositional phrases. If reclassified as a dynamic verb, it is most frequently used to describe activities and processes. The most frequent subject is the first person singular *I* as speakers express what they think. The progressive *think* expresses two other special functions, tentativeness and the interpretative, both functions are subjective. Tentativeness and tentative planning make plans and suggestions more polite and rather indirect. Regarding the interpretative function, the most common subject is the second person *you* as speakers interpret thought processes of their addressees, the first person singular *I* follows. Again, as with *being* + subject complement, there appeared some common patterns such as *I was (just) thinking* (ex. 9a, b; 11a, b, g, h; 12b; 13a, d, e; 14a; 33 hits) and *I'm (just) thinking* (ex. 10c, 12c, g; 14b, c, d; 15a, 30 hits). These patterns had been mentioned in the theory as they were reported by other researches. The results thus support their findings. As can be seen, most of the examples are highly subjective. This stems from the nature of the verb *think* itself as it is usually used to express the speaker's subjective view, but also from its use in tentative and interpretative functions.

4.2.3. *Feeling*

According to Leech's classification, the stative verb *feel* can be ranked into more than one category. It can belong to verbs of inert and active perception, cognition as well as verbs of bodily/internal sensation and verbs of attitude. The distinction of the verb *feel* to categories will be commented on in the section dealing with its function. When it is reclassified from a stative to dynamic verb, speakers indicate conscious effort and activity (see 2.3.2.). Sometimes, the verb *feel* is not used dynamically as it expresses special functions with higher degree of subjectivity, as will be seen further on.

4.2.3.1. Formal characteristics

Sentence type

The declarative sentence was the most common sentence type (83 %), however, the number of interrogative sentences was the highest when compared to the two preceding verbs (ex. 15, 17 %). Almost all interrogative sentences were in the present tense (15 hits) and the subject was *you* (13 hits). This is connected with the fact that speakers very frequently inquired about others' condition and feelings, which is a sign of politeness.

(15) how are *you* feeling? (SQWC 547)

Tense

Tense distribution varied more than in the case of *being* and *thinking*. Nevertheless, present tense prevailed (see Table 17, ex. 16a) as speakers express their condition, feelings or attitude at the moment of speaking. Speakers also describe how they felt in the past (ex. 16b, 25 %). In some cases, historic present was used for past narration or reported speech (ex. 16c). Present perfect expressed feelings in the past leading up to the present (ex. 16d). There was also one instance of the future progressive (ex. 16e.)

Tense	Number of hits
present	70
past	25
present perfect	4
future	1
Total	100

Table 17: *Feeling* – tense distribution

- (16) a. I'm feeling happier with it this is really lovely (S2DD 77)
 b. after you rang I was feeling fine and then all of a sudden it was like oh not feeling so good (SV4W 652)
 c. and even this morning I said oh I said how're you feeling (S7SZ 1030)
 d. where have you been all night? like I 've been feeling really sick all night (S6Q6 1573)
 e. ANONnameF will be feeling pushed out she 'll have to do something (S8RU 261)

Affirmative/negative sentences

The majority of sentences were affirmative (87 %), there were 13 negative sentences. Adjectives usually expressing positive evaluation were negated to express that someone was not feeling very good (ex. 17). As will be seen, negative sentences form another common pattern.

- (17) she's *really not* feeling great today (SP9F 1756)

Complementation

In the data, *feel* is either a copular verb or a transitive verb. If the verb *feel* is a copular verb the subject complement is most frequently realized by adjective phrases (78 %, see Table 18) and prepositional phrases (6 %) and only one noun phrase which had the function of the subject complement. The most frequent adjectives were *well* (ex. 18a, 6 hits), *better* (ex. 18b, 6 hits), *good* (ex. 18c, 4 hits), *confident* (ex. 18d, 3 hits), *great* (ex. 17, 2 hits), *hungry* (2), *insecure* (2) and *sorry* (2). Some of the adjectives were comparative (ex. 16a, 18b, 7 hits). The most common intensifiers were *really* (ex 16d, 17, 9 hits) and *pretty* (ex. 18d, 2 hits) and the most common downtoner was *a (little) bit* (ex. 18e, 9 hits). There was a strong semantic preference for *well* in negative sentences (6 hits) often premodified by the intensifier *very* (ex. 18a, 4 hits) forming a common pattern. There was also an interesting example of a new derivation *vomitty* (ex. 18f). If the verb *feel* behaves as a transitive verb it is complemented by noun phrases in the function of object (ex. 18g, 10%) and object dependent clauses (2 %).

Complementation	Number of hits
Copular verb	85
• adjective phrase	78
• prepositional phrase	6
• noun phrase	1
Transitive verb	13
• noun phrase	10
• dependent clause	2
• prepositional phrase	1
Unclear ¹³	2
Total	100

Table 18: *Feeling* – complementation

- (18) a. I wasn't feeling *very well* (SZVB 603)
b. getting in in a better place - yeah - because I'm feeling *better* (S28F 550)
c. that's good I bet you're feeling *good* (S3U3 459)
d. feeling *pretty confident* for your soup? (S7JG 2213)
e. I am feeling *a bit* rushed are you getting to the gym? (SN4N 19)
f. she was feeling vomitty (SKCY 588)
g. she was feeling my sister's little hand (S6Q6 1473)

Negative prosody is associated with 56 % of the sentences (see Table 19), most frequently with the subject complement formed by evaluative adjective phrases (ex. 16d, e; 17; 18a, e, f). Here are some other examples of negative complementation: *poorly, down, ropery, edgy, blue, cross, shit, grim, pressured, iffy, rushed, stressed, sick, depressed, unconfident, weird, wild eyed, low, nervous, unwell*. Positive prosody was, on the other hand, less frequent (ex. 16a; 18b, c, d); questions were mostly neutral in terms of evaluative stance.

Semantic prosody	Number of hits
negative	56
neutral	25
positive	19
Total	100

Table 19: *Feeling* – semantic prosody

4.2.3.2. Function

The classification of the functions of the progressive when used with the stative verb *feel* is similar to the functional classification of the verb *think*. The verb *feel* can behave as a dynamic verb expressing activity and process uses. Apart from these, special functions such as tentativeness, the interpretative and emotional emphasis are expressed by the progressive

¹³ Complementation could not be identified as the clauses were not complete, however, other components such as sentence type, tense, etc. could be determined.

feel (see Table 20). Furthermore, the classification of the functions is closely connected with semantic category of the verb, as will be seen. The verb *feel* can express active perception, inert and passive perception as well as bodily/internal sensations subsuming physical and mental states. Furthermore, as a verb of inert cognition it can express opinions. If it is found among verbs of attitude, it expresses intentions and suggestions. The use of the progressive *feel* is thus rather varied.

Function	Number of hits
Activity/process use	73
Special functions	27
• Interpretative	12
• emotional emphasis	10
• tentativeness	5
Total	100

Table 20: *Feeling* – function

Activity/process use

Activity and process uses occur in combination with the verb *feel* expressing bodily/internal sensation and active perception. The verb *feel* expresses temporary happenings or states. As mentioned by Leech (see 2.3.2.), there is not any difference in meaning if *feel* is used with the progressive or the present simple regarding verbs of internal sensation as these verbs refer to temporary states. Temporariness can be further supported by the adverb *now* (ex. 19a). The data also showed that not only verbs expressing physical states can be temporary. Even mental states can occur with the progressive and are thus temporary (ex. 19b). As was mentioned in the theoretical part, the progressive forms temporal frames (ex. 16b, d). Pronouns *I* and *you* were the most frequent subjects for all functions (see Table 21). The first person singular was predominant as speakers expressed their own feelings and condition. The second person *you* was mostly found in questions (ex. 15, 14 hits). Furthermore, the subject *you* appears very often in temporal (ex. 19c) and hypothetical sentences (ex. 19d).

The verb *feel* also expresses active perception. Normally, verbs of perception describe passive states. If used with the progressive the verb *feel* shows animate agency, thus active perception. It is reclassified to an activity verb as there is a conscious effort on the part of the speaker. The activity use can answer the question *What are you doing?* (ex. 19e). There were also examples of the progressive *feel* expressing the process of gradual change (5 hits). The complements of *feel* describe physical or mental states; the most frequent complement for this function was the comparative *better* (4 hits) (see also 2.4.2.1.). The present perfect

progressive enhances the sense of gradual change as the change extends over a longer period, it is not abrupt (ex. 19f). There was also one instance of habitual use of the progressive in combination with the verb *feel*. The state iterates, it is supported by the adverbial (ex. 19g). The perfect progressive together with the adverbial conveys that the habit is new and temporary, it has limited duration.

Subject	Number of hits
I	35
you	35
she	13
common noun	5
he	4
this/one of them/someone	3
proper noun	2
we	1
it	1
They	1
Total	100

Table 21: *Feeling* – subject

- (19) a. I'm feeling sleepy *now* (SJM7 1293)
 b. I'm feeling depressed (S6JL 539)
 c. so when you're feeling that stressed we've just got ta stop smoking again (S7JH 2008)
 d. I was thinking imagine if you're feeling really edgy (S6HP 71)
 e. don't start touching the chicken with your hands - I'm feeling if it's hot (SHX8 18)
 f. he's been feeling *better* (S27D 382)
 g. I've been feeling grim *most mornings* (SECS 665)

Emotional emphasis

Sometimes, the function of the progressive form of the verb *feel* could not be explained only in terms of the meanings generally associated with the progressive (i.e. temporariness, temporal framing, gradual change, habitual use). In these cases, the progressive conveyed the speaker's subjective perspective. It served as a tool of expressivity and emotional emphasis (ex. 20a), describing feelings, opinions and attitudes (ex. 20b). However, the emotional emphasis could be found in activity and process uses as well, as the functions very frequently combine, therefore it was difficult to separate them.¹⁴

¹⁴ Where a function typical of the progressive could be identified, the example was classified as the activity/process use, regardless of whether the sentence also conveyed emotional subjective evaluation or not.

- (20) a. you can just keep the peace regardless of what I'm feeling (S8RY 34)
b. I don't understand why I'm feeling weird about the fact that he 's added this girl (SQ2W 355)

Interpretative function

Speakers also interpreted feelings and sensations of other speakers (ex. 18c). They tried to be empathetic while looking for the underlying interpretation. Their interpretations were also accompanied with modal epistemic verbs (ex. 21).

- (21) a. she must have been mm feeling a bit int- insecure (S9X9 181)

Tentativeness

Speakers made tentative suggestions using the verb *feel* in the progressive (ex. 22a) whereby the suggestion was less direct. Speakers also expressed their intentions in a tentative way with the phrase *to feel like something/doing something* (ex. 22b). The verb *feel* used in this way is a transitive prepositional verb and is classified among verbs of attitude. As with *thinking*, the preposition can be omitted (ex. 22c). The degree of uncertainty is apparent.

- (22) a. just going out for some drinks in --ANONplace *if you're feeling up to it* then you 're very welcome to (SMW8 2835)
b. it's time for a siesta – yeah I'm feeling a bit like that (SKCY 1111)
c. are you feeling a period drama mood? (SHHG 890)

4.2.3.3. Conclusion

The verb *feel* pertains to various semantic classes. Although declarative sentences prevail, interrogative sentences are not infrequent as speakers inquire about feelings and condition of others. It is mostly complemented by adjectival and adverbial phrases sharing negative semantic prosody. It also forms a frequent pattern: *not to feel very well* (ex. 18a). In this case, there was not semantic preference for subject. Together with the progressive, the verb *feel* expresses activities and processes which are temporary. This category subsumes temporal states, temporal frames, gradual change and habitual. Apart from these, the progressive *feel* conveys three subjective functions: emotional emphasis, tentativeness and the interpretative as the verb *feel* itself is highly subjective. It is usually emphatic and used for intensification.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the analysis will be summarized. The aim of the diploma thesis was to determine which verbs, especially which anti-progressive verbs, are used most frequently with the progressive in present-day spoken British English and what functions the progressive performs if combined with anti-progressive verbs. As mentioned in the theoretical part, the use of the progressive in present-day English has been reportedly increasing. It was suggested that the increase of the progressive may be connected with its rising compatibility with anti-progressive verbs and the rise of subjective function and other complex functions in general. These functions were explained in the theoretical part together with Leech's classification of verbs and the distinguishing features of the progressive.

5.1. Quantitative analysis

The data was extracted from the Spoken BNC 2014. The method of the research consisted of frequency quantitative analysis of the whole spoken corpus and detailed qualitative analysis examining only a selection of the data. It was expected that dynamic verbs would prevail among verbs in the progressive, which was consequently proved by the quantitative analysis. However, anti-progressive verbs were not missing on the list of the most frequent progressive verb forms. Out of 50 verbs there were 7 anti-progressive verbs (6.- *thinking*, 10.- *having*, 11.- *being*, 36.- *feeling*, 37.- *seeing*, 40.- *hoping*, 46.- *wondering*). These verbs were divided into various semantic classes such as verbs of inert cognition, verbs of attitude, verbs of inert perception and state verbs of *having* and *being*. Regarding dynamic verbs, event verbs were the most frequent. The 50 most frequent progressive forms also included stance verbs.

5.2. Qualitative analysis

Three anti-progressive verbs *be*, *think* and *feel* were selected for the qualitative analysis as it was expected that they should have varying functions. These verbs were studied from formal and functional perspective. Regarding formal characteristics, sentence type, tense distribution, polarity, frequent subjects and complementation were analysed. Semantic prosody was studied only in the case of *be* and *feel*.

5.2.1. Formal characteristics

Declarative sentence was the most common sentence type for all three verbs. If interrogative sentences appeared, interpretative function prevailed, or in the case of *feel* speakers inquired about other's condition. The present progressive was the prominent tense as speakers referred to the present moment of speaking. Sometimes speakers used historical present to report what happened or what they said in the past. The past progressive was less frequent than the present progressive. It appeared in reporting past behaviour, thoughts and feelings. It formed temporal frames rendering the narration more expressive. It was most prominent with the verb *think*, which supports the findings mentioned in the theoretical part. The fact that the past progressive occurred most frequently with the verb *think* is connected with the tentative function. Speakers made their suggestions and plans more tentative and indirect by the use of the past tense. The present perfect progressive was rather infrequent in the dataset. It appeared mostly in the case of the verb *feel* to express feelings in recent past leading up to the present. The progressive in combination with modal epistemic auxiliaries occurred only in the case of the verb *feel*, usually having the interpretative function. As expected, affirmative sentences amounted to majority. However, in the case of *be* and *feel*, there were found some common patterns, such as *I'm not being funny* or *not feeling (very) well*, in which the negative polarity was a distinguishing feature.

5.2.1.1. Being

The progressive form of the verb *be* is used in copular predications with *be*, where the copular verb is typically complemented by adjective and noun phrases. The sentences with the progressive *be* perform two functions – the interpretative and the evaluative function. In sentences with the interpretative function, there is a stronger tendency towards relatively fixed expressions than in the evaluative ones. In interpretative sentences, there was a strong semantic preference for the first person singular *I* and the adjective *funny*. Another frequent collocate was the adjective *serious*. There was no particular semantic preference regarding the evaluative function, however, the complements shared mostly negative prosody. Speakers usually expressed their negative attitude and evaluated behaviour of others, therefore as opposed to the interpretative function, the first person singular *I* was not the most frequent subject. Second and third person subjects occurred more often. Evaluation was sometimes very emotive. Apart from intensifiers, the progressive itself served as a tool of intensification. As can be seen, both functions are subjective.

5.2.1.2. *Thinking*

The complementation of the verb *think* differs from the complementation of *being*. It is most frequently complemented by dependent content clauses, prepositional phrases and direct speech. The verb *think* mainly expressed activities and process. This category subsumed the activation of thought process, which means that the temporally unspecified meaning of the state verb *think* is reduced to describe temporary action. Very frequently temporal frames were formed and the narration was more expressive. The most common subject was the first person singular *I*. This also holds for the tentative function by which speakers expressed their suggestions and plans. The data also confirm the findings mentioned in the theoretical part as there appeared examples of tentative planning without any preposition. Finally, the interpretative function collocated more with the second person *you*.

5.2.1.3. *Feeling*

Similarly to the verb *be*, the verb *feel* was also most frequently complemented by adjective phrases. Therefore, semantic prosody was analysed and 56 % of instances showed negative prosody as with the verb *be*. The most frequent adjective was *well* forming the common pattern *not feeling (very) well*. The verb *feel* can be classified into more semantic groups. It ranks among verbs of inert and active perception, inert cognition, verbs of attitude and verbs of internal sensations. If it is used with the progressive the verb is reclassified as active verb expressing activities and processes, including active perception, temporal states, temporal frames, gradual change and habitual. As Leech noted, regarding verbs of internal sensations there is not any difference if the progressive or the simple tense is used. The progressive also rendered propositions more expressive and subjective. The interpretative progressive was used to empathize with other speakers, having predominantly epistemic modality. Tentative plans were expressed by the progressive *feel like something/doing something*. *Feel* can express mental and physical states, perception as well as opinions and intentions. The most frequent subject was the first person singular *I*, which points to its overall subjectivity.

As can be seen, the qualitative analysis revealed several features shared by all three verbs although it was sometimes difficult to generalize about the functions of these verbs as the functions can be combined. The progressive expressed temporariness, limited duration, temporal frames and subjectivity. This points back to the fact that the progressive has acquired a complex set of functions which are sometimes inseparable. The analysis revealed that the progressive is often associated with negative semantic prosody. It may be caused,

however, by the fact that “humans have a greater need to talk about problematic events and processes than unproblematic ones” (Partington 2004, 144).

It was also seen that the progressive forms certain patterns which are built in the lexicons of speakers as compact units. There is also strong semantic preference for the first person singular *I*. This may be connected with high degree of subjectivity expressed by the progressive in conversation. Furthermore, stative verbs usually have the subjective function: “progressives with private verbs convey a number of subjective meaning components such as intensification, tentativeness and politeness, and the increase in such meanings can be argued to be a prime example of subjectification.” (Levin 2013, 213) In fact, the abovementioned functions were the most shared and most common among the three anti-progressive verbs analysed. To conclude, the increase of the progressive use is often explained as the result of the increasing subjectification of English. Indeed, drawing on the results of the analysis of the three anti-progressive verbs, *be*, *think* and *feel*, it can be claimed that the progressive is very often a subjective device and that it is being used more and more with anti-progressive verbs.

6. References

- Aarts Bas, Joanne Close and Sean Wallis (2010) 'Recent changes in the use of the progressive construction in English'. In: Bert Cappelle and Naoaki Wada (eds.) *Distinctions in English grammar, offered to Renaat Declerck*. Tokyo: Kaitakusha. 148-167.
- Biber, Douglas et al. (1999) *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*.
- Dušková, Libuše. et al. (2006) *Elektronická mluvnice současné angličtiny*. Available on-line from: <http://emsa.ff.cuni.cz/> (accessed: 4 April 2019).
- Freund, Nina (2016) 'Recent Change in the Use of Stative Verbs in the Progressive Form in British English: *I'm loving it*'. *Language Studies Working Papers*, vol. 7, 50-61.
- Huddleston, Rodney and Geoffrey K. Pullum et al. (2002) *The Cambridge Grammar of the English language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Killie, Kristin (2004) 'Subjectivity and the English progressive'. *English Language and Linguistics* 8.1, 25-46.
- Kranich, Svenja (2010) *The Progressive in Modern English. A Corpus-Based Study of Grammaticalization and Related Changes*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi.
- Leech, Geoffrey (2004) *Meaning and the English Verb*. (3rd edition). Harlow/New York: Longman.
- Leech, Geoffrey, Marianne Hundt, Christian Mair and Nicholas Smith (2009) *Change in Contemporary English. A Grammatical Study*. Chapter 6: The progressive. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 118-143.
- Levin, Magnus (2013) 'The progressive in modern American English'. In Aarts Bas, Joanne Close, Geoffrey Leech and Sean Wallis (eds) *The Verb Phrase in English. Investigating Recent Language Change with Corpora*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 187-216.
- Love, Robbie, Dembry, Claire, Hardie, Andrew, Brezina, Vaclav, & McEnery, Tony (2017) 'The Spoken BNC2014'. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 22:3, 319-344.
- Nesselhauf, Nadja and Ute Römer (2007) 'Lexical-grammatical patterns in spoken English. The case of the progressive with future time reference'. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 12:3, 297-333.
- Partington, Alan (2004) 'Utterly content in each other's company' *International Journal of Corpus Linguistic*. 9:1, 131-156.
- Petré, Peter (2017) 'The extravagant progressive: an experimental corpus study on the history of emphatic [BE Ving]'. *English Language and Linguistics* 21.2, 227-250.
- Quirk, Randolph et al. (1985) *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. New York: Longman.

Römer, Ute (2005) *Progressives, Patterns, Pedagogy. A corpus-driven approach to English progressive forms, functions, contexts and didactics*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Smith, Nicholas (2003) 'A quirky progressive? A corpus-based exploration of the will + be + -ing construction in recent and present day British English.' In: Archer, Dawn/Rayson, Paul/Wilson, Andrew/McEnery, Tony (eds.), *Proceedings of the Corpus Linguistics 2003 Conference*. (Technical Papers 16.) Lancaster University: UCREL, 714-723.

Smith, Nicholas and Paul Rayson (2007) 'Recent change and variation in the British English use of the progressive passive' *ICAME Journal* No. 31, 129-159.

Sources

Spoken British National Corpus 2014, distributed by Lancaster University and Cambridge University Press Lancaster University and Cambridge University Press. Accessed through the *BNCweb* (CQP-edition). Available at <<https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk/bnc2014spoken/>> [last accessed 28 June 2019].

7. Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá průběhovými tvary v současné mluvené britské angličtině. Úvod práce shrnuje nedávno publikované studie, které zkoumají průběhové slovesné tvary v současné angličtině. Tyto studie zaznamenaly značný nárůst užívání průběhových tvarů především v mluvené angličtině. Nárůst frekvence průběhových tvarů se připisuje faktu, že tyto tvary se nyní vyskytují i se slovesy, která se s průběhovými tvary tradičně nevyskytovala. Jako druhý důvod se uvádí nárůst subjektivní funkce v mluvené řeči. Cíl diplomové práce je určit, jaká slovesa tradičně nekompatibilní s průběhovými tvary jsou v současné britské angličtině nejčastěji užívána s průběhovými tvary a také v jakém poměru jsou tato slovesa zastoupena vůči slovesům tradičně se vyskytujícím s průběhovými tvary. K analýze funkcí průběhových tvarů v kombinaci se stavovými slovesy byla vybrána tři často se vyskytující stavová slovesa – *be*, *feel* a *think*. Data jsou čerpána z korpusu současné britské mluvené neformální angličtiny Spoken BNC 2014.

V úvodu teoretické části jsou definovány průběhové tvary v angličtině jako vidově-temporální kategorie. Dále je popsána formální stránka průběhových tvarů. Za nejvíce používaný čas v kombinaci s průběhovými tvary je považován přítomný čas, a to zejména v mluvené řeči. Minulý čas je zastoupený v menší míře. Často tvoří časové rámce a slouží k barvitému vyličení minulého děje. Minulý čas se také čteně používá k vyjádření nejistoty a zdvořilosti. Předpřítomný čas je nejméně zastoupený čas. Průběhové tvary se mohou vyskytovat i v kombinaci s modálními slovesy vyjadřujícími epistemickou modalitu. Kladné věty jsou častější než záporné. Některá slovesa nicméně preferují záporné věty ve větší míře než ostatní, jako například sloveso *being*.

Teoretická část dále vymezuje hlavní funkce průběhových tvarů, a to průběhovost, dočasnost a nedokončenost děje. Klasifikace sloves do sémantických tříd z hlediska kompatibility sloves s průběhovými tvary dle Leech (2004) je použita k vymezení sloves nekompatibilních s průběhovými tvary. Dichotomii mezi stavovými a dynamickými slovesy je věnovaná značná část. Leech také zmiňuje výjimky, kdy jsou stavová slovesa použita právě s průběhovými tvary, především případy kdy jsou stavová slovesa reklasifikována na dynamická.

Závěr teoretické části se zabývá subjektivní funkcí, která je považována jedním z důvodů nárůstu užití stavových sloves s průběhovými tvary. Mluvníci užívají průběhové tvary, aby zdůraznili obsah svých promluv. Promluvy jsou tak více expresivní. Následně jsou určeny zvláštní subjektivní funkce průběhových tvarů, které údajně vedou k jejich nárůstu. Mezi ně patří vyjádření zdvořilosti, evaluativní funkce pomocí konstrukce *being* + adjektivum, citové

zdůraznění, vyjádření postoje či rozčilení a interpretativní funkce. Mezi ostatní funkce se řadí vyjádření vývoje, generická funkce, popis opakujících se dějů a vyjádření budoucnosti.

Praktická část zahrnuje představení materiálu a metody výzkumu a krátké seznámení s korpusem Spoken BNC 2014. Korpus obsahuje přes 11 milionů slov; jedná se o transkribované konverzace mezi rodilými mluvčími britské současné angličtiny nahrané během let 2012 až 2016. Korpus byl zkompileován na univerzitách v Lancasteru a Cambridge. Korpus obsahuje nahrávky spontánní hovorové řeči a vychází ze starší verze korpusu z roku 1994. Nová verze umožňuje zachycení vývoje anglického jazyka a jeho současného stavu.

Metoda výzkumu sestává ze dvou částí. Frekvenční kvantitativní analýza obsahuje seznam padesáti nejčastějších sloves vyskytujících se v kombinaci s průběhovými tvary. Výsledky potvrdily předběžnou hypotézu. Dynamická slovesa byla nejfrekventovanější slovesa vyskytující se s průběhovými tvary. Nicméně slovesa tradičně nekompatibilní s průběhovými tvary se v seznamu také objevila a některá z nich i na prominentních pozicích. V seznamu padesáti nejfrekventovanějších sloves v průběhovém tvaru se vyskytlo sedm sloves nekompatibilních s průběhovými tvary, a to v následujícím pořadí: 6.- *thinking*, 10.- *having*, 11.- *being*, 36.- *feeling*, 37.- *seeing*, 40.- *hoping*, 46.- *wondering*. Tato slovesa se řadí mezi kognitivní slovesa, slovesa vyjadřující postoj a vnímání a v neposlední řadě stavová slovesa typu *having* a *being*. Z dynamických sloves se vyskytla nejčastěji slovesa zachycující události. Kvalitativní analýza vzorku dat zkoumá tři slovesa tradičně považovaná za nekompatibilní s průběhovými tvary, a to slovesa *be*, *think* a *feel*. Tato slovesa jsou popsána z formálního a funkčního hlediska. Formální popis zahrnuje zastoupení větných typů, distribuci časů, záporných vět, podmětů a komplementace. Sémantická prosodie byla zkoumána v případě sloves *be* a *feel*. Výsledky jsou dále podloženy tabulkami. Příklady, které byly analyzovány v praktické části, jsou k dispozici v appendixu. Výsledky budou nyní shrnuty.

Nejčastější větný typ u všech tří sloves byla věta oznamovací. Tázací věty se často vyskytovaly s interpretativní funkcí anebo se slovesem *feel*, kdy se mluvčí zajímali o stav ostatních. Přítomný průběhový čas se ve vzorku dat vyskytl nejčastěji, jelikož mluvčí odkazovali k momentu promluvy. V některých případech používali mluvčí historický přezens k vyličení minulého děje anebo k vyprávění toho, co bylo řečeno. Minulý průběhový čas byl méně zastoupený než přítomný čas. Minulý průběhový čas se vyskytoval ve vyličení chování, myšlenkových procesů a pocitů v minulosti. Minulý čas tvořil časová ohraničení, promluvy byly tak více barvité. Jedna ze studií citovaná v teoretické části zmiňuje, že sloveso *think* se často vyskytuje s minulým průběhovým časem, což bylo potvrzeno i analyzovaným vzorkem

dat. Tento fakt je spojený se zdvořilostní funkcí. Mluvčí vyjadřovali své návrhy a plány s větší měrou nejistoty a zdvořilosti za pomoci minulého času. Předpřítomný průběhový čas se ve vzorku dat objevil zřídka. Jeho výskyt se omezil pouze na sloveso *feel* při vyjádření pocitů z nedávné minulosti, které byly stále platné i v přítomnosti. Modální slovesa se s průběhovým časem nevyskytovala ve vyšší míře. Jejich výskyt se opět omezil jen na sloveso *feel* v kombinaci s interpretativní funkcí vyjadřující epistémickou modalitu. Ve většině případů vzorek dat obsahoval kladné věty. Nicméně, v případě sloves *be* a *feel* se vyskytly časté vzorce jako *I'm not being funny* a *not feeling (very) well*, ve kterých má záporná polarita značný význam.

Being

Sloveso *being* je sponové sloveso, proto je často doplněno adjektivními a substantivními frázemi ve funkci jmenné části přísudku. Studie zmíněné v teoretické části uvádějí jako doplnění pouze adjektiva, nicméně vzorek dat odhalil i přítomnost substantiv a zájmen. Průběhové *being* vyjadřuje dvě základní funkce – interpretativní a evaluativní. U interpretativní funkce převažovala sémantická preference pro první osobu jednotného čísla a záporné adjektivum *funny*, tyto prvky tvořily častý vzorec. Další častý kolokát bylo adjektivum *serious*. Evaluativní funkce nevykazovala žádné sémantické preference. Nicméně doplnění slovesa nesla převážně negativní prosodii. Mluvčí velmi často vyjadřovali svůj negativní postoj a hodnotili chování ostatních. Proto se mezi nejčastějšími podměty neobjevovala první osoba jednotného čísla, jako tomu bylo u interpretativní funkce, nýbrž druhá a třetí osoba. Hodnocení byla často velmi emotivní. Kromě různých intenzifikátorů sloužil průběhový čas sám jako intenzifikační prostředek. Jak evaluativní, tak interpretativní funkce se obě řadí mezi subjektivní.

Thinking

Doplnění slovesa *think* se značně liší od doplnění slovesa *being*. *Think* bylo často doplněno závislými obsahovými větami, předložkovými frázemi a přímou řečí. Sloveso *think* vyjadřovalo převážně dynamické děje a aktivaci myšlenkových procesů, kdy bylo sloveso omezeno průběhovým časem na dočasné dění. Sloveso *think* velmi často tvořilo časová ohraničení, čímž bylo vyprávění minulého děje více expresivní. Nejčastější podmět byla první osoba jednotného čísla i v případě zdvořilostní funkce, kdy mluvčí vyjadřovali své návrhy a plány. Vzorek dat také potvrdil studie z teoretické části, které uvádějí, že vyjádření nejistých plánů nemusí být uvozena předložkami. S interpretativní funkcí se často vyskytovala druhá osoba.

Feeling

Stejně jako sloveso *be*, bylo sloveso *feel* často doplněno adjektivními frázemi. Proto u něj byla analyzována i sémantická prosodie, která byla z 56 % negativní. Nejčastěji se ve vzorku dat objevovalo adjektivum *well*, které tvořilo vzorec *not feeling (very) well*. Sloveso *feel* je možno zařadit do více sémantických skupin. *Feel* patří mezi slovesa vyjadřující vnímání a postoj, kognitivní slovesa a slovesa vyjadřující vnitřní stavy a pocity. Pokud je *feel* použito s průběhovým časem může vyjadřovat děje a procesy. Tato kategorie zahrnuje aktivní vnímání, dočasné stavy a časová ohraničení, změny a nedávné zvyky. Pokud se vyskytuje s průběhovým časem, vyjadřuje dočasné stavy. Jak uvádí Leech, slovesa vyjadřující vnitřní stavy a pocity se mohou kombinovat jak s přítomným prostým tak s průběhovým časem bez změny významu, jelikož sloveso vyjadřuje dočasnost. Průběhové *feel* dělalo promluvy více expresivními a subjektivními. Mluvčí užívali interpretativní funkci za účelem vcítění se do pocitů ostatních. Interpretativní funkce byla často kombinována s modálními slovesy vyjadřujícími epistemickou modalitu. Nejisté plány byly vyjádřeny průběhovou frází *feel like something/doing something*. *Feel* často sloužilo k vyjádření psychických a fyzických stavů, vjemů, názorů a záměrů. Nejčastější předmět byla první osoba jednotného čísla, což poukazuje na všudypřítomnou subjektivitu.

Kvalitativní analýza odhalila několik společných rysů objevujících se u tří zkoumaných sloves. Slovesa nekompatibilní s průběhovými tvary se s průběhovými tvary dají kombinovat v případě, že jsou reklasifikována na dynamická, vyjadřují dočasnost a časová ohraničení. Pokud nejsou reklasifikována na dynamická, průběhové tvary vyjadřují subjektivní funkci. V některých případech nelze o funkcích sloves vynášet obecné závěry, jelikož se funkce často kombinují a doplňují. Analýza také prokázala, že průběhové tvary jsou často spojovány s negativní sémantickou prosodií. To může být způsobeno faktem, že „lidé mají větší potřebu sdělovat nepříjemné zážitky a dění než ty příjemné.“ (Partington 2004, 144) Sémantická prosodie navíc sama o sobě slouží k hodnocení a vyjádření postojů mluvčích a také k interpretaci promluv. Z analýzy je zjevné, že průběhové tvary vyjadřují všechny tyto funkce. Proto je možné konstatovat, že průběhové tvary spoluvytvářejí prosodický význam promluv, který je převážně negativní. Vzorek dat také odhalil, že průběhové tvary tvoří často se vyskytující vzorce a ustálená spojení. Průběhové tvary také vykazují sémantickou preferenci s první osobou jednotného čísla. Tento fakt může být spojen s vyšší mírou subjektivity průběhových tvarů. Subjektivní funkce upřednostňuje první a druhé osoby, jelikož má často citové zabarvení a vyskytuje se v konverzacích. Stavová slovesa často

vyjadřují subjektivní funkci, jelikož „průběhové tvary se stavovými slovesy mají několik subjektivních významů jakožto intensifikaci, nejistotu a zdvořilost. Nárůst právě takovýchto významů může být připisován jako hlavní doklad subjektifikace.“ (Levin 2013, 213) Tyto funkce byly totiž společné pro všechna tři analyzovaná slovesa. Zkoumaná slovesa patří mezi stavová slovesa, která nejčastěji tolerují průběhové tvary. Sdílejí vyšší míru subjektivity, promluvy jsou tak více expresivní a emotivní. Analýza tří sloves, která se pokládají za nekompatibilní s průběhovými tvary, ukázala, že průběhové tvary jsou často prostředkem vyjadřování subjektivity.

8. Appendix

List of examples analysed in the thesis

Being

Number	Example	Source text
1.	he's <i>being</i> disloyal to her	SQWC 225
2.	am I <i>being</i> incredibly stupid?	SVBB 3010
3.	are you <i>being</i> serious or not?	S6W8 3210
4.	people who go on whose thing <i>hasn't always been</i> being good at school	SMYJ 228
5.	oh don't be ridiculous - you have - I'm not being ridiculous	SWY3 132
6.	that's unkind - I wasn't being unkind I - you were being unkind- I wasn't honestly	S4HW 652
7.	<i>I'm not being funny</i> he was he was horrible	S8X7 272
8.	it's eh so is he actually funnier when he's <i>just</i> being <i>himself</i> ?	SV49 429
9.	what's she up to? what's she – nothing she's <i>just being ill</i>	SDJA 362
10.	they're being <i>so nice</i>	S8K9 246
11.	you know for you er you <i>are being a bit snappy</i> but you erg- in the whole scale of people being snappy it's such a small thing that nobody would really notice it	S28F 282
12.	oh you are just being <i>nuisance</i>	S2XV 742
13.	he's just being <i>a pompous arsehole</i> he is	SVD6 1701
14.	I'm not being <i>very good company</i> this tonight	S79Y 271
15.	with the amount of money that they 've got they're <i>being difficult</i> aren't they? oh they're <i>just being horrible</i>	SQVW 482
16.	like stopped the car and <i>she was like</i> cos <i>I was being really childish</i> and <i>I was like</i> her	STK7 39
17.	<i>he's not being arsey</i> with anybody else <i>he's just being arsey with me</i>	SRD5 796
18.	why <i>the fuck</i> are you <i>such a cunt</i> like why are you <i>being so mean</i> like? ruining it for everyone...	STGP 146
19.	<i>I'm not being funny</i> <i>I'm just saying</i> - well well I get backchat from	S6UQ 173
20.	<i>I was just joking</i> – oh - but yeah - I thought you <i>were being serious</i> - I thought that was a thing ticket for four	SBM6 2486
21.	uh sorry what what did you say then? - <i>I was just being stupid</i> <i>I said</i> shall I change my name to Claire Claire	SGAX 1061

Thinking

Number	Example	Source text
1.	What were you thinking? do you want some water?	SKYQ 109
2.	oh right is that what you were thinking of?	SGN8 1056
3.	<i>I was coming home</i> this way every time and <i>I was thinking</i> Jesus Christ you get so used to the route every	SE3Y 145
4.	<i>I was thinking about ordering</i> a pizza from Papa John'	S5B4 915
5.	and <i>I saw this car</i> in my s- and <i>I'm thinking</i> he wants to come past	ST8H 321
6.	<i>I'm not even thinking</i> about religion when <i>I'm watching</i> these at all	SQ82 578
7.	<i>you're not thinking</i> about taking them out <i>are you</i> ?	SF8D 2465

8.	<i>I was thinking we could keep it here</i>	SHKF 319
9.	<i>I was just thinking that it's funny</i>	S8K9 496
10.	<i>I'm thinking oh god please don't let it be a problem</i>	S28F 2346
11.	<i>we're thinking of watching a a horror</i>	SV5A 7
12.	<i>I think you were thinking about it weren't you?</i>	SZQX 1804
13.	<i>we were thinking possibly Scrabble?</i>	SCWW 92
14.	<i>I was thinking that too</i>	S3JF 1394
15.	<i>I was thinking taking my nail polish off</i>	SXRR 248
16.	<i>oh did you? – oh I thought I thought I'm thinking - I used it I used it this morning</i>	SKRC 695
17.	<i>I was thinking about that last night when I was in bed</i>	SRRS 266
18.	<i>and you're thinking well where is the balance?</i>	SD65 1396
19.	<i>I'm sort of thinking this guy you know is you know always you know</i>	S8JW 1020
20.	<i>well I suppose part of me is thinking a little bit if it was a question of money</i>	SBG4 729
21.	<i>I was thinking of maybe swimming</i>	SEYD 425
22.	<i>I don't know enough about it but I I'm thinking more and more about being involved in like politics or something</i>	SJV7 633
23.	<i>hmm let 's maybe do lamb ooh I 'm thinking gammon</i>	SCWW 147
24.	<i>I was just thinking either we go in two cars</i>	SMEB 836
25.	<i>you can't make them swim I was thinking</i>	S2DD 737
26.	<i>so you're thinking as I do</i>	S2C9 1580
27.	<i>that's what I'm thinking</i>	SD65 111
28.	<i>I was thinking that too</i>	S3JF 1394
29.	<i>but at the same time I think she was probably thinking I'm seeing ANONnameM the day after so yeah she</i>	SXR9 748

Feeling

Number	Example	Source text
1.	<i>how are you feeling?</i>	SQWC 547
2.	<i>I'm feeling happier with it this is really lovely</i>	S2DD 77
3.	<i>after you rang I was feeling fine and then all of a sudden it was like oh not feeling so good</i>	SV4W 652
4.	<i>and even this morning I said oh I said how're you feeling</i>	S7SZ 1030
5.	<i>where have you been all night? like I've been feeling really sick all night</i>	S6Q6 1573
6.	<i>ANONnameF will be feeling pushed out she 'll have to do something</i>	S8RU 261
7.	<i>she's really not feeling great today</i>	SP9F 1756
8.	<i>I wasn't feeling very well</i>	SZVB 603
9.	<i>getting in in a better place - yeah - because I'm feeling better</i>	S28F 550
10.	<i>that's good I bet you're feeling good</i>	S3U3 459
11.	<i>feeling pretty confident for your soup?</i>	S7JG 2213
12.	<i>I am feeling a bit rushed are you getting to the gym?</i>	SN4N 19
13.	<i>she was feeling vomitty</i>	SKCY 588
14.	<i>she was feeling my sister's little hand</i>	S6Q6 1473
15.	<i>I'm feeling sleepy now</i>	SJM7 1293
16.	<i>I'm feeling depressed</i>	S6JL 539

17.	so when you're feeling that stressed we've just got ta stop smoking again	S7JH 2008
18.	I was thinking imagine if you're feeling really edgy	S6HP 71
19.	don't start touching the chicken with your hands - I'm feeling if it's hot	SHX8 18
20.	he's been feeling <i>better</i>	S27D 382
21.	I've been feeling grim <i>most mornings</i>	SECS 665
22.	you can just keep the peace regardless of what I'm feeling	S8RY 34
23.	I don't understand why I'm feeling weird about the fact that he 's added this girl	SQ2W 355
24.	she must have been mm feeling a bit int- insecure	S9X9 181
25.	just going out for some drinks in --ANONplace <i>if you're feeling up to it</i> then you 're very welcome to	SMW8 2835
26.	it's time for a siesta – yeah I'm feeling a bit like that	SKCY 1111
27.	are you feeling a period drama mood?	SHHG 890